

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

# LIFE OF LUTHER.

---

By GUSTAV JUST.

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE



75  
Presented to  
Carol Benck  
by First Lutheran  
Brotherhood.

Oct 1948.













**Dr. Martin Luther.**



# LIFE OF LUTHER,

WITH

SEVERAL INTRODUCTORY AND CONCLUDING CHAPTERS FROM  
GENERAL CHURCH HISTORY.

---

By

GUSTAV JUST.

(Translated from the German by S. and H.)



St. Louis, Mo.

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE.

---

Copyright, 1903,  
by  
CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE,  
St. Louis, Mo.  
PRINTED IN U. S. A.

---

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. The Christians of the First Century.....	1
“ II. The Persecutions .....	8
“ III. Constantine and the Spreading of Christianity in Germany.....	14
“ IV. Popery and Monks.....	17
“ V. The Forerunners of the Reformation.....	21
“ VI. Luther's Childhood .....	26
“ VII. Luther's Student Days.....	28
“ VIII. Luther in the Cloister.....	34
“ IX. Luther as Teacher.....	38
“ X. Luther the Reformer.....	43
“ XI. Luther the Mighty Warrior.....	49
“ XII. Luther the Staunck Confessor.....	56
“ XIII. The Fanatics and the Peasants' War.....	64
“ XIV. The Colloquy at Marburg .....	69
“ XV. The Augsburg Confession.....	70
“ XVI. Bible, Catechism, and Hymnbook.....	76
“ XVII. Luther's Family Life.....	82
“ XVIII. Luther's Last Days and Death.....	91
“ XIX. Afflictions of the Lutheran Church in Germany after the Reformation.....	95
“ XX. The Lutheran Church in America.....	99

## MOTTO:

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow considering the end of their conversation.

Hebrews 13, 7.

## CHAPTER I.

### The Christians of the First Century.

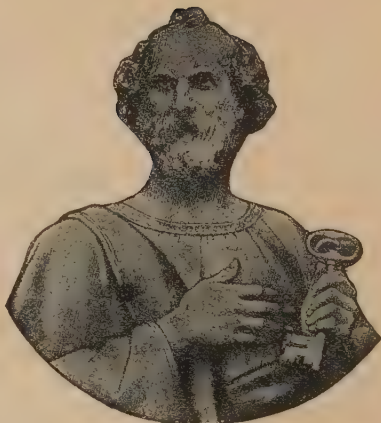
**1. The Apostles of the Lord.** When our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bid farewell to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, and ascended into heaven, He commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. In this power they were to go forth into all the world and bear witness of that which they had seen and heard. He said unto them: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," Acts 1, 8.

The disciples faithfully executed this command of the Lord; for after the day of Pentecost upon which they had received the Holy Ghost, they went forth and proclaimed the Gospel of Christ crucified in Jerusalem, in Judaea, in the surrounding countries, and in the whole world. They baptized Jews and heathen, and everywhere founded Christian congregations. But at once the word of the Lord was fulfilled: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you," John 15, 20. For the spreading of Christianity aroused bitter enmity among Jews and Gentiles against the disciples of the Lord. *James*, the brother of John, was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom at Jerusalem. We are told: "When the officer, who was to bring him into court, saw how steadfastly James adhered to his faith in Christ, he was so affected, that he confessed himself likewise a Christian. Thus both of them were condemned.



While they were being led away he begged James to forgive him, whereupon the apostle replied, 'Peace be with thee,' and kissed him." Hereupon both were beheaded at the command of Herod Agrippa.

When Herod saw that this pleased the Jews, he had *Peter* also apprehended and cast into prison, from which the apostle was miraculously delivered by an angel. Fearlessly he continued to preach Christ and founded many congregations in Asia Minor. The legend says that he was crucified under Emperor Nero at Rome.



The Apostle Peter.

*James*, the Lord's brother, was bishop of the congregation at Jerusalem. Because of his pious life, he was at first highly esteemed among the Jews. But finally he also became an object of their hatred. The legend reports that the high priest led him to the pinnacle of the temple and there commanded him to deny Christ. When, however, he boldly confessed his Savior, he was hurled to the ground below. Then the enraged mob pressed about him in order to stone



The Evangelist Matthew.

him to death, when he cried out upon his knees, "I implore Thee, God Father, for them; for they know not what they do." Then a tanner stepped up and killed him with a club.

*Philip* is said to have perished in Phrygia, *Bartholomew* in Asia Minor, *Thomas* in India proper, and *Andrew* in Scythia.

*John*, at first, labored in Jerusalem, and later

became pastor of the congregation at Ephesus. For a time he was banished to the Isle of Patmos, afterward, however, he was permitted to return to Ephesus. When, because of his advanced age, he could no longer preach nor walk, he would have himself carried into the assembly and would always address it in these words, "Little children, love one another." He died a natural death, nearly one hundred years of age.

The Evangelist John.



The Apostle Paul.

Chief of all the apostles was the apostle of the Gentiles, *Paul*. Although he did not belong to the twelve disciples of the Lord, he was, nevertheless, directly called and made a chosen vessel of the Lord. Before his con-

version his name was Saul, and he belonged to the strict sect of the Pharisees. Being an enemy of the Lord's disciples, he was gratified to see Stephen expire when stoned to death by the Jews. Soon thereafter he himself became a zealous persecutor of the Christians in Jerusalem, and wished to continue his cruel work also in Damascus. But on the way thither he was converted by the Lord and called to be an apostle. Thenceforth he preached the Gospel of the Savior of sinners, especially among the Gentiles, and soon many Christian congregations arose also among them. But he also shared the fate of the other apostles; he likewise suffered death for the doctrine of Christ. About 61 A. D. he was taken a prisoner to Rome. There he abode two years. Chained to a soldier he preached the Gospel in that city and wrote many letters to the congregations which had been founded by him among the Gentiles. For a short time he regained his liberty, but was imprisoned a second time. In 67 or 68 A. D. he suffered martyrdom, being beheaded under Nero.

**2. The First Christian Congregations.** "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts 2, 42. This, in a few words, is the picture which the "Acts of the Apostles" paints of the first Christian congregation at Jerusalem. The first Christians were diligent and attentive hearers of God's Word. Thereby they grew in knowledge and in the faith of the exalted Savior, and in His power they defied all temptations and persecutions. Through the Word they remained in communion with their Head, Jesus Christ, and practiced intimate fellowship with each other. This showed itself in breaking of bread, Holy Communion, and in their united praying, praising, and giving of thanks.

How intense their love was for their Savior and their brethren we may see from the following words in the Acts:

“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessed of lands and houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need,” Acts 4, 34. 35. They were ready to sacrifice life itself for their Savior and for each other. After their Lord’s example they practiced charity towards their enemies, and prayed for them. They obtained favor with God and man, and the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved. For many Jews forsook their national faith and joined the Christian congregation. True, some hypocrites and false Christians were found among them, as the example of Ananias and Sapphira plainly shows. As with the congregation at Jerusalem, so with all other Christian congregations of the first century the word of the apostles was the only rule and guide of faith and life.

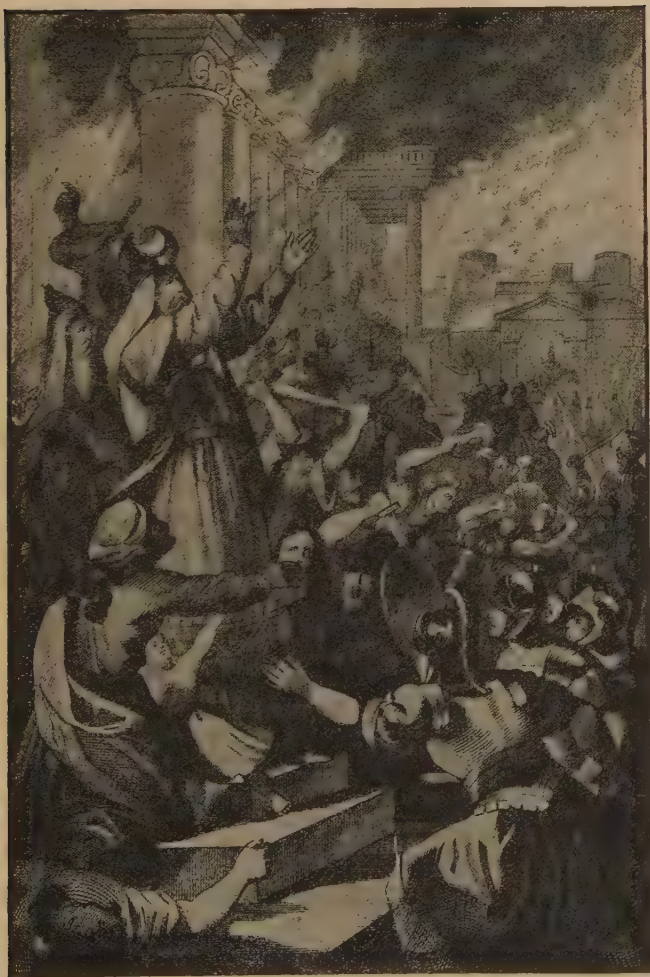
The apostles were the first teachers of the congregations. Together with the apostles the presbyters and elders, sometimes also called bishops, presided over the congregations. It was their duty to conduct divine services and watch over faith and life of the congregations. They were assisted by the deacons and almoners to whom was entrusted the care for the poor and the sick. Sunday was chosen by the Christians as their day of public worship because on this day the Lord Jesus arose from the dead. At first the congregation assembled at the homes of its members. It was only later that churches were built for this purpose. At these services, spiritual hymns and psalms were sung, portions of the Holy Scriptures were read and explained, and prayers offered. Holy Communion was celebrated every Sunday, and was received by the entire congregation.

Strict discipline was practiced in the Christian congregation. If anyone walked disorderly, he was admonished; if, in spite of this, he continued impenitent, he was excluded from the Christian congregation as a heathen and publican, and not received again until he repented.

**3. The Destruction of Jerusalem.** At last the word of Jesus was fulfilled: "For the day shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another: because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." The terrible judgment drew near! The cruel Emperor Nero at that time ruled in Rome. Under him the Jews rebelled and drove the Romans from their country. Nero sent his general Vespasian to chastise the rebels. Victoriously he pressed forward. Soon thereafter Nero died, and Vespasian was recalled and himself elected emperor. His son Titus was to complete the chastisement of the Jews. In the spring of 70 A. D. he marched against Jerusalem with an enormous army and laid siege to the city. His demand that the Jews surrender, in order to save their city and magnificent temple, was rejected with scorn by the proud leaders. Titus at once cast a trench about the city, and bombarded it by means of catapults.

The condition of the city was frightful. It happened to be the time of the passover, and because of this festival more than two millions of people had assembled in Jerusalem. They were not at one among themselves; some were in favor of surrendering to the Romans, others were determined to resist to the last. The latter gained the ascendancy, and filled with ferocity and desperation they fought against the Romans. No one dared even to speak of surrender, because the leaders had forbidden it under penalty of death. Soon frightful famine and much other misery





The Destruction of Jerusalem.

arose. Everything was eaten, even the most disgusting things, as, for instance, the excrements of animals; yes, a woman of noble birth killed and devoured her own child. Epidemics broke out and carried off thousands. Because the corpses could not be buried, they were thrown over the walls and filled the trenches. Yet, in spite of this, the Jews would not surrender. Then Titus took the city by storm, and the Romans killed and slaughtered whatever came in their way. The temple was defended by the Jews with great stubbornness. Titus had commanded to preserve this building, but a soldier threw a firebrand into it, and soon the magnificent edifice was enveloped in flames. The city of Jerusalem was laid even with the ground, according to the word of the Lord: "Not one stone shall remain upon another," Luke 19, 14.

The siege had lasted four months, and in this time one million of Jews had perished. The prisoners were led away, some being compelled to fight with wild beasts in the arena, others being sold into slavery.—But what had become of the Christians? As the swallows forsake the house whose walls the masons are tearing down, so the congregation of the Lord had left Jerusalem before the siege, and had found a refuge in the mountain village of Pella, on the Dead Sea, on the other side of the river Jordan.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Persecutions.

**1. The Persecutions under Nero, Decius, and Diocletian.** About the year 100 A. D. the apostles of the Lord had all fallen asleep. The preaching of the Gospel, however, had not ceased, but was carried on vigorously everywhere, and now persecutions against the Christians arose also among the heathen. They began already under *Nero*.

In 64 A. D. this cruel tyrant set fire to Rome, the great capital of the then known world, and amused himself with the spectacle. The conflagration raged for six days, and reduced the greater part of the city to ashes. In order to shield himself against the wrath of the people, who accused him of kindling the fire, he charged the hated Christians with the crime. These were now forced to endure the most excruciating torments and tortures. Many were sewed into the skins of wild beasts, and then thrown to dogs who tore them to pieces. Others were covered with wax and pitch, placed in the imperial gardens and set afire, that as torches they might illuminate the darkness of the night.

One of the most severe persecutions occurred under Emperor *Decius*. For nearly half a century the Christians had lived in peace, but this peace had made many of them secure and lukewarm. Origen, a noted teacher of the time, complains: "Some attend church only on the high festivals, and then, generally, only to pass away time. Some leave the church as soon as the sermon is ended, without speaking to the teachers or asking them questions; others do not listen to a single word, but stand in some corner of the church and chatter with each other." From this sinful security they were aroused by the persecution bursting over them like a sudden storm. The emperor issued a decree that the Christians were to be forced by threats and tortures to sacrifice to the heathen deities. Whoever refused to do this was to suffer death. This terrible decree caused the greatest consternation among the Christians. Many, especially of the rich, readily ran to the altars and offered the required sacrifices. Yes, so great was their fear of man that they denied ever having been Christians at all. Others, in spite of tortures, remained steadfast at first, but finally also denied their faith. However, there were also such as remained firm in the faith and praised God who considered them worthy to suffer death for Christ's sake.

The last and most frightful of all persecutions began under Emperor *Diocletian*. The churches of the Christians were torn down, the collections of Holy Scriptures were burned, and innumerable Christians were tortured to death. They were left to starve in dungeons; they were forced with bare feet to walk upon hot, burning coals, or sharp nails; they were fastened to wooden machines by means of which their limbs were torn from their bodies. The torturers tore their flesh with iron nails, or covered them with honey, and laid them bound into the sun that they might be stung to death by the flies. But many Christians suffered these tortures with great firmness and could not be forced to forsake Christ. The executioners, finally, became weary, their swords grew dull, and — the church of the Lord remained unconquerable.

**2. Ignatius.** Ignatius was a disciple of the apostles and presided over a flourishing congregation at Antioch. Emperor Trajan demanded of him to deny his Savior and sacrifice to the gods. But he declared that the gods of the heathen were vanities. He said, "There is but one God, who has made heaven and earth, and one Christ, whose kingdom is my inheritance." Because of this confession he was taken to Rome and suffered martyrdom. He listened to his death sentence with composure, even with joy; he desired to depart and to be with Christ. He wrote concerning his journey: "From Syria to Rome I fought with wild beasts who became the more enraged the more benefits were bestowed upon them. However, let them throw me into the fire, let them nail me to the cross, let them tear my limbs from my body — what is all that, if I may enjoy Jesus!" How joyfully he met death can be seen from the words he addressed to the Romans: "I am seeking Him who died for us; He is my gain that has been preserved for me. Let me follow the sufferings of my God; my love is crucified; I long for the bread of God, for the flesh of Jesus Christ." To the Christians who attempted to have



Christians Suffering Death in the Circus.



him set at liberty he wrote: "Do not trouble yourselves on my account; it is better for me to die for Christ's sake than to rule over the kingdoms of this world. I am God's wheat, and am to be ground by the wild beasts in order to become pure bread. What of it if the beasts become my grave—thus I trouble no one in my death." Upon his arrival in Rome he was delivered to the Governor. A few days thereafter he was thrown to the wild beasts, who fell upon him and tore him to pieces, while the assembled heathen witnessed the frightful spectacle with fiendish delight. His remaining bones were gathered by his faithful servants and laid to rest in Antioch.

**3. Polycarp.** He was a disciple of St. John, and, later on, became bishop of Smyrna, in Asia Minor. Under Marcus Aurelius he suffered martyrdom at the stake. Polycarp, listening to the entreaties of his congregation, who would gladly have saved him from his persecutors, fled to a country seat. His abode was soon betrayed, and he was delivered to his captors who found him engaged in prayer with several friends. Noticing that the house was surrounded, he said, "The Lord's will be done!" Thereupon he invited his enemies in, received them in the most hospitable manner, and asked them to grant him one hour for prayer. With so much earnestness he prayed to his Savior that even the heathen were touched by his devotion. He was led back to the city on an ass. There he was at first kindly urged to sacrifice to the gods, but he replied, "I will not follow your advice." At sight of the aged man (he was ninety years old) the Governor was touched and said to him, "Consider your great age. Swear by the emperor, deny Christ, and I will release you!" Polycarp exclaimed: "For eighty-six years I have served Him, and He has done me no ill; how can I now denounce my King and my Savior?" The Governor said, "I will throw you to the wild beasts, or I will force you by fire, if you do not change your mind!"

Polycarp replied, "You threaten me with the fire that burns for a short time and is soon extinguished, because you do not know the fire of the coming judgment which is in store for the wicked. Why do you hesitate?" When hereupon the herald in the arena announced, "Polycarp confesses himself to be a Christian," the entire multitude cried, "To the lions with Polycarp!" But he was condemned to die at the stake, and at once the enraged people on all sides gathered fagots for the burning. Polycarp now took off his own clothes, loosed his own girdle, and even tried to take off his own shoes. His prayer, not to nail him to the stake, was granted. Firm and unmovable he stood against the erected pole and praised God with a loud voice. The pile was kindled. But it is reported that the fire would not touch this faithful witness of the Lord. The flames surrounded him, as sails caught by the wind, and his body shone like gold and silver that is being refined in the oven. As his body was not consumed the executioner thrust his sword into his breast, and the corpse fell into the fire. The members of his sorrowing congregation piously gathered his remains and interred them.

**4. Perpetua.** In the beginning of the third century the Christians were fiercely persecuted in Northern Africa. Among the prisoners at Carthage there was a young woman of noble birth, Perpetua. She was the mother of a nursing child. Her heathen father took the greatest pains to persuade his daughter to forsake Christ. In pleading accents he begged her, "My daughter, have pity upon my gray hairs. Oh, pity your father, if I have ever been worthy of this name! Take pity on your child which cannot survive you. Can nothing move you, my daughter? If you perish we will be disgraced before all men!" In saying this her father kissed her hands and fell down at her feet. But Perpetua did not deny the Lord; she remained firm and resisted all temptations in the strength of Him whom we are

to love more than father or mother. On the day before her execution she celebrated the customary love feast with her fellow prisoners, and to the gazing heathen she declared, "Look straight into our faces, that you may know us on the day of judgment!" Filled with consternation and shame, many of the heathen walked away and were converted.—The day of her deliverance approached; the fights with the wild beasts began. Perpetua, together with her maid Felicitas, was thrown to a wild cow, which at once tossed them to the ground. To her brother who stood near she cried, "Abide in the faith, love one another, and do not let my sufferings frighten you!" Finally, she received the death blow at the hands of a gladiator. Thus she entered into glory, and received the crown of life at His hands to whom she proved faithful unto death.

### CHAPTER III.

## Constantine and the Spreading of Christianity in Germany.

**1. Constantine.** After many anxious years a time of refreshing peace finally came for the Christians. For by God's wonderful providence a man kindly disposed toward the Christians ascended the Roman throne. This was Emperor Constantine. His father had already been a friend of the Christians, and his mother had even accepted the faith. After his father's death, Constantine was proclaimed Emperor by the army. This was in the summer of 306. When, in 312, he marched against Maxentius, who had disputed his power in Italy, he called upon the God of the Christians for help against his opponent. The opposing forces met in the vicinity of Rome. While the sun was setting, it is reported that Constantine saw in the heavens a cross bearing the bright inscription: *In hoc signo vinces*, i. e., "You

will conquer in this sign!" He at once had the eagles removed from the standards, and had them replaced by the sign of the cross. Hereupon his army marched from victory to victory till the power of his enemy was completely broken. And from this time Constantine became a zealous protector of the Christian church. He published a law permitting every Roman citizen to become a Christian. He even went so far as to make the Christian religion the religion of the state. He favored the Christians by appointing them to high public offices. Sad to say, this increased the number of those who accepted Christianity for the sake of worldly gain. The church now, indeed, had rest from without. But Satan tried to ruin it by false doctrine. A bishop, named Arius, arose and taught: "Christ is not true God, but only a creature." Constantine then called a church council to assemble at Nice, in Asia Minor, in 325 A. D. Three hundred and eighteen bishops assembled there with him. In the discussions which followed Athanasius, a deacon, and afterwards bishop, of Alexandria, took a most prominent part. With irresistible eloquence he effected the overthrow of the false doctrine of Arius and the victorious establishment of saving truth. Constantine died on Pentecost Day, 337, having been baptized a short time before. In compliance with his last wish he was buried in the Church of the Apostles, at Constantinople.

**2. The Spreading of Christianity in Germany.** Now the time had come when the light of saving truth was to shine over Germany and dispel the night of heathenish darkness. For some time already the Gospel had been carried to Germany by Christian merchants and Roman prisoners, and thus it came to pass that at isolated places Christian congregations were founded; but the real spreading of Christianity began in the sixth century through missionaries from Ireland and England.—Among the first to visit Germany was the Irish monk *Fridolin*. Together with

his companions he arrived in the Black Forest among the Alemanni. With visible success he preached the Gospel to these children of the forest. He died in 550, and was succeeded by *Columban*, who, together with twelve disciples, brought the message of salvation in Christ to the inhabitants of the present Alsatia. But meeting with much opposition he fled to Switzerland, and then to Italy, where he died in 615, a true Christian to the last.—His pupil *Gallus* had remained in Switzerland and there had founded the farfamed cloister St. Gallus. Here he labored with signal blessing for the spreading of Christianity among the Swiss and Suabian tribes, until, in 640, the Lord called him to his reward.

Besides these messengers of the faith others also preached the Gospel in Germany, *Emeran* in Bavaria, *Kilian* in Wuerttemberg. The latter suffered martyrdom with his followers in 685. Twenty years after Kilian's death the English Presbyter *Willibrod*, with eleven assistants, went to the Frisians. At first the heathen king Radbod offered stubborn resistance, but in time he had Willibrod to baptize his own son. And after the king's death the mission work met with great success. Because of the multitude of fish Willibrod could scarcely haul in the net. After fifty years of faithful labor he died as bishop of Utrecht, in the year 739. These and other missionaries were the real apostles of Germany, and independent of Rome. Through their labors congregations were founded and flourished everywhere.

Before long, however, a man came to Germany who subjugated the German church to the Pope. This was Winifred, also called *Boniface*. He carried on his work mainly in Thuringia, Hessa, Bavaria, and Frisia. In 755, together with his companions, he was slain by the heathen Frisians. The most stubborn resistance to Christianity was offered by the Saxons. Only after thirty years of con-



tinuous warfare were they finally conquered by Charles the Great, and the Gospel gained a foothold amongst them.— Thus the Gospel of Christ sped from people to people, and in the year 1000 great numbers everywhere in Germany confessed Christ Jesus and Him crucified.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Popery and Monkery.

**1. The Origin of Popery.** When, in the course of time, the Christian church continued to expand, it became necessary for the larger congregations to engage more than one pastor. An immediate consequence was that one of them attained to higher eminence and was called the bishop by preference. Great deference was especially paid to the bishops of Rome, of Jerusalem, of Alexandria, of Antioch, and of Constantinople. The smaller congregations frequently sought their advice and requested their decision in difficult matters. But the power and the authority of the Roman bishops soon outstripped that of the rest. In consequence of this they assumed a haughty demeanor, exalted themselves above the other bishops, and, finally, arrogated to themselves the position of supreme judges in the Church of God, and grew very indignant if any one dared to dispute their authority. They now claimed that Peter had founded the congregation at Rome and had presided over it for some time as its bishop; that he had been the chief of the apostles, the authorized viceregent of Christ upon earth, and that his successors, the bishops of Rome, had inherited these powers from him. Although these arrogant claims were by no means generally admitted, yet the Roman bishop succeeded in enforcing his demands. He was pleased to have himself called "*Papa*," or "*Pope*." The Western bishops finally submitted and acknowledged him to be the supreme head of the church. In the East,

however, the bishop of Constantinople was accorded the highest rank. Both bishops now fought for the supremacy in the church, and as neither would submit to the other a schism resulted. There arose the Roman Catholic and the Greek Catholic church, and this division remains to the present day.

When, in 752, Pipin, the king of the Franks, presented to the Pope a large territory in Central Italy, the Pope became a temporal prince. From now on the Popes continually sought to increase their temporal power and speak the decisive word in the councils of the mighty of this earth. The man who raised popery to the highest pinnacle of its power was Pope Gregory VII, formerly a monk called Hildebrand, the son of an artisan. In 1073 he ascended the papal throne. He forbade the priests to marry, and demanded that all bishops, who at that time were also temporal princes, should receive their office and their possessions, even their temporal power, not from their worldly overlords, but from his hands. He asserted: "As the moon receives its light from the sun, so emperors and princes receive their power from the Pope. The Pope is the vice-regent of Christ upon earth, where the mighty of this world owe him obedience; he alone has the right and the power to appoint them to office, or to depose them." Gregory died 1085. His successors accepted his principles. Thus Innocent III demeaned himself as the absolute spiritual lord and master over all Christian princes and kings, and forced them to submit to his power. Then the word of Holy Scriptures, concerning the Roman Popes, came to pass, 2 Thess. 2, 4: "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

**2. The False Doctrines of Popery.** Sad, indeed, grew the condition of the church under the Popes. Many

bishops and priests busied themselves more with worldly affairs than with the Word of God and the welfare of the church. The people were shamefully neglected. Generally speaking, they had no schools, no books, and, especially, no Bibles. There was scarcely any Christian knowledge, for the Word of the Lord was hidden in those days. In consequence of this the saddest ignorance prevailed everywhere among the common people. Such being the conditions, it was a small matter for Satan to sow his tares among the wheat. With increasing frequency false doctrines appeared in the church and displaced the Word of God. For some time already mass had been celebrated instead of Holy Communion. For the superstition had arisen, that Christ was sacrificed anew by the priest when mass was celebrated on the altar. This false doctrine was supported by the other superstition that through his consecration the priest changed the bread and the wine into the real body and blood of Christ. Because they feared that the blood of Christ might be spilled they denied the cup to the laity, and thus mutilated the Lord's Supper.

Early in its history popery invented the doctrine that the departed souls went to purgatory, where, by intense suffering, they might be cleansed from the dross of sin. However, it was held that the Pope and the church had the power to shorten these pangs of purgatory by reading countless masses. Whoever paid enough money was told that he need not remain long in purgatory. This proved to be a profitable business for the Pope. For many rich already in their lifetime set aside large sums of money to pay for these masses.

Indulgence was another false doctrine. The Popes taught: The church possesses an inexhaustible treasure in the merits of Christ and of the saints. On this the Pope can draw at will for the benefit of the living and of the dead, and with it forgive the sin of those who offer

him therefor sufficient money, or other equivalents. In the stead of Christ's suffering and merit, which becomes ours alone through faith, they substituted mere human works. Christ, our true Advocate, was thrust aside, and the saints were called upon for their protection and intercessions. The Virgin Mary, especially, became the refuge in time of need, and this gave rise to the shameful "mariolatry." Nor did idolatry stop here. Even pictures, statues, and real or supposed relics of the saints were set up for worship and adoration. Thus was fulfilled the word of Scriptures, 2 Thess. 2, 10. 11: "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie."

**3. Life in the Monasteries.** Already in the time of the great persecutions many Christians had fled into the forests, caves, and among the cliffs in order to spend their lives in pious meditation and devotion. When, in the time after Constantine, the church grew more and more worldly, the number of those increased who thought that they could serve God better in quiet seclusion than amid the noise of a corrupt world. These were the so-called hermits. As a rule, they led a life of privations and self-inflicted tortures. In time, numbers of them united and adopted certain rules and laws by which their communities were governed. They also lived in their own buildings, called cloisters. These were generally built in inhospitable regions. Whoever joined the order had to forsake all his worldly possessions, and vow to lead a life of celibacy and of absolute obedience to his superiors. These are the so-called monastic vows.

This monastical life was regarded very highly by the people, and all kinds of legacies added gradually to the lands and riches of the cloisters. Their number increased rapidly; and in the twelfth century there were thousands of them. The monks were the most zealous and the most

faithful tools of Antichrist, and everywhere endeavored to spread the Pope's heresies. They incited the people to rebellion against their lawful government and spied out and persecuted those who would no longer submit to the Pope. But it was above all the halo of false holiness which it possessed in the eyes of the people that made monkery such a curse to the church. Men, women, and children ran into the cloister in order to be sure of eternal life; for the delusive notion prevailed that man could justify himself before God and be saved by his own works. And, at that, they regarded the works commanded by God of little account, esteeming their self-chosen, monkish practices of the highest importance. Life in the monastery is, therefore, condemned by the words of Christ: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

## CHAPTER V.

### The Forerunners of the Reformation.

**1. Peter Walden.** Peter Walden, who was a rich and pious merchant of the twelfth century, lived in Lyons, an important city in Southern France. One day he was sitting at meal with his friends and conversing on the evils of the time and the corruption of the church. Suddenly one of his companions fell dead before their eyes. This occurrence made a deep impression on Walden, and he sought now, more than ever before, the one thing that is needful. Through diligent reading and study of Holy Scriptures he came to a knowledge of the truth, and his heart was filled with heavenly comfort and joy. The deeper he entered into the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures the more he recognized the errors and the decay of the Roman Catholic church. He saw that Christendom had departed from the true way of salvation. He, therefore, felt constrained to bring the



sweet Gospel of Christ to lost souls. In 1170 he sold all his possessions and traveled through the country, teaching and preaching. He had the four Gospels translated into French and spread them among the people. The scattered seed sprung up and bore rich fruit; for very soon thousands wanted to hear of no other doctrine than the pure doctrine of God's Word.

Walden and his adherents, called Waldensians, taught: "In all questions pertaining to our salvation we dare trust no man or book, but must believe the Holy Scriptures only. There is but one mediator; the saints must not be worshiped; purgatory is a fable invented by men. There are but two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper." Their life conformed so well to their doctrine that King Lewis of France exclaimed: "Truly, these heretics are better than I and all my people!" The following is another beautiful testimony for the Waldensians: "They lead a purer life than other Christians. They do not swear, except necessity demands it, and beware of taking God's name in vain. They keep their promises faithfully; they are truthful in their words and live peacefully together in brotherly love."

But the more their doctrine and life testified of their faith, the more the hatred against them increased. Peter Walden was forbidden to preach or explain the Scriptures, and when, in spite of this, he continued to sow the seed of the Word of God, he was excommunicated by the Pope. He fled from one place to another, and everywhere proclaimed the Gospel with signal blessing. His followers were most cruelly persecuted by the Roman church, which used every means to destroy them. About a million of them were slain in continuous wars of persecution. Seven thousand were slaughtered in a church at one time. A judge in Spain had 10,000 of them burned alive and imprisoned 97,000 who perished enduring the most frightful tortures.

But in spite of fire and sword they could not be extirpated, and exist unto this day. Removed from the markets of the world, and distant from the great highways, the descendants of the Waldensians live in the unapproachable mountain glens of Savoy and Piedmont.

**2. John Wyclif.** John Wyclif was Doctor and Professor of Theology at the University of Oxford. He directed his attacks chiefly against monkery, and unsparingly denounced the idling, the begging, and the perversion of religion by the monks. They therefore entered complaint against him with the Archbishop, and Wyclif was deposed from his chair at the university. From now on he testified even more decidedly against the errors and abuses of popery. He maintained: "The Roman church is not superior to the other churches; Peter had no preeminence over the other apostles, and the Pope, as far as his power to forgive sins is concerned, is but the equal of every other pastor." He spoke very emphatically against indulgence, against the adoration of relics, and reproved the popular errors by which the poor souls were deceived. Wyclif was now denounced as a heretic at the court of the Pope, but his eloquent and masterful defense at the trial procured his release. He translated the Bible into English and taught pious men to preach the Gospel to the people. He died in 1384 at Lutterworth, where he had been pastor. His numerous writings were spread by his followers throughout all Europe, and especially Bohemia, where they bore rich fruit. But the hatred against Wyclif did not cease with his death. In compliance with an order of the Council of Constance, where his doctrines were condemned, his bones were exhumed, burned, and the ashes thrown into the river.

**3. John Huss.** Huss was born in 1369 at Hussinecz, in Bohemia. Through reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of Wyclif he came to a knowledge of the truth and boldly lifted his voice against the errors and abuses prev-

alent in the church. He preached against indulgences, purgatory, and the ungodly life of the priests. Thereby he became an object of hatred to the Pope. He was soon ex-



John Huss.

communicated by the Pope, and when he continued to preach in Prague, where he was pastor, and was supported by that city, it was also placed under the ban. The churches were closed, the bells were silent, the dead were denied

Christian burial, Baptisms and marriages could only be performed in the graveyards.

Huss was cited to appear at the council to be held at Constance. Although Emperor Sigismund promised him safe-conduct, nevertheless Huss undertook the journey to Constance foreboding no good. And indeed, in spite of the safe-conduct, he was taken and thrown into a foul prison immediately upon his arrival. When Sigismund expressed his disapproval the monks told him that faith need not be kept with a heretic. Huss defended himself before the council with great steadfastness, and as he would not recant he was condemned to die at the stake. He was deposed from the priesthood and made an object of ridicule and scorn. On his head was placed a paper cap painted with numerous devils who were tormenting a poor sinner. He was led out to execution, and on the way frequently called upon the Savior for mercy. He was then chained to an upright pole, and hay and straw, saturated with pitch, were piled about him. Once more he was tempted to recant and thus to save his life. But Huss remained faithful. Now the flames surrounded him. The smoke curled above him. "Christ, Thou Lamb of God, have mercy upon me!" the faithful witness sang twice with a loud and clear voice. But when he began the third verse, he was overcome by smoke and flames and gave up the ghost. It is reported that while at the stake he prophesied: "To-day you are roasting a goose, but after a hundred years a swan will come, which ye will not roast."

**4. Jerome Savonarola.** In Italy a man arose who was to startle the proud Pope and his priests out of their security. This was Jerome Savonarola. The misery and the corruption in the church had driven him into the cloister. Through the Word of God he learned the truth, and then publicly denounced the depravity of his time. He was an eloquent and passionate preacher. He cried

out: "Before long the sword of the Lord will come over Italy and over all the earth, and then the church will be renewed!" The Pope of that time lived in the grossest vices. Rome was the hotbed of all sins and crimes. Savonarola complained: "The poison is heaped up at Rome to such an extent that it infects France, and Germany, and all the world. Things have come to such a pass that we must warn everyone against Rome. Rome has perverted the whole of Scriptures!"

By the Pope he was anathematized, and by the temporal court condemned to die at the stake. With two of his companions he was to be hanged on the gallows, and then their corpses were to be burned. Savonarola entertained the sure hope that judgment would come upon Rome, and the Lord would renew the corrupt church. He said: "Rome will not be able to quench this fire, and if it is quenched God will light another; aye, it is kindled already in many places, but they do not know it. Before long the desolation and idolatry of the Roman Pope will be reproved, and a teacher will be born whom no one can resist." On Ascension Day, May 23, 1498, with cheerful resignation, he met death at the hand of the hangman.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Luther's Childhood.

**1. Luther in the House of His Parents.** When Savonarola breathed his last in the Market Place at Florence, God had already chosen His servant who was to destroy the tyranny of the Pope. The swan, prophesied by Huss, appeared. For on November 10, 1483, a son had been born to poor peasants in Eisleben, at the foot of the Hartz Mountains. Already on the following day he was baptized, and received the name Martin, in honor of the



saint to whom this day was sacred. His parents were Hans and Margaret Luther. They came from the village Moehra, having emigrated to Eisleben. When Martin was six months old they moved to the neighboring town Mansfeld, where his father hoped to support his family by working in the mines. Luther said of his ancestors: "I am the son of a peasant; my father, my grandfather, and my great-grandfather were all industrious peasants. Later on my father moved to Mansfeld, where he worked in the mines." Again he said: "My parents, at first, were very poor. My father was a poor miner, and my mother often carried the wood upon her back in order to raise us children. They endured many hardships for our sake."

The child was a great joy to its parents, and they loved it dearly. The father would often step to the cradle and pray loud and fervently that God would grant grace to his son that, mindful of his name, he might become a true Luther and live a pure and sincere life. From earliest childhood both parents trained their boy to fear God and love all that is good. Parental discipline, however, was most severe, and tended to make Luther a very timid child. In later years he said: "My father once chastised me so severely that I fled from him and avoided him until he won me to himself again." And of his mother he said: "For the sake of an insignificant nut my mother once whipped me till the blood came. But their intentions were the best." Luther at all times gratefully acknowledged this.

**2. Luther at School.** Little Martin was not yet five years of age when, followed by the prayers of his parents, he was brought to the school at Mansfeld. This school was situated upon a hillside, in the upper part of the city, and quite a distance from the boy's home. In inclement weather, when the road was bad, he was often carried there by his father or by Nicolas Oemler. Here he zeal-

ously learned the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; he was also instructed in reading, writing, and the principles of Latin grammar. The school even surpassed his home in the severity of its discipline. The schoolmaster was one of those incapable men that treated his children as hangmen and bailiffs treat their prisoners. In one forenoon Luther received fifteen whippings. Such tyrannical treatment filled him and his fellow pupils with fear and timidity.

The religious instruction which he received also served to intimidate and terrify him. He scarcely learned more than popish superstition and idolatry. True, at Christmas time the church sang: "A Child so fair is born for us to-day," but instead of the glad tidings: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior," hell-fire was preached in the school. Luther says: "From youth I was trained to turn pale at the very mention of Christ's name, for I was instructed to regard Him as a severe and angry judge. We were all taught that we had to atone for our own sins, and because we could not do this we were directed to the saints in heaven and advised to invoke dear Mother Mary to pacify the wrath of Christ and obtain mercy for us."

## CHAPTER VII.

### Luther's Student Days.

**1. Luther in Magdeburg.** When Luther was fourteen years of age he bade farewell to his parents and home and, with his friend Hans Reinecke, went to Magdeburg; for his father wished to give him a thorough education. Having received no spending money from home, they were forced to live upon the alms gathered on the way from charitable hands. In Magdeburg Luther attended

the high school, a noted school of that day. But here, as everywhere, the false doctrines of popery prevailed, and the sweet comfort of the Gospel was not preached. The poor pupils were directed to perform such works and penances as the Roman church considered meritorious. Luther relates the following incident as illustrating the monastic sanctity of those days: "With these my eyes I saw a Prince of Anhalt in a friar's cowl begging for bread in the streets, and bending under the sack like an ass. He looked like a specter, nothing but skin and bones. Whoever saw him smacked with devotion and had to be ashamed with his secular calling."—In bodily things also little Martin had to endure much hardship. It is true, lodge and shelter were supplied by the city, and the instruction, given by the monks, was free of charge, but the pupils themselves had to provide their support. Because of his father's poverty Luther received but little assistance from home and was compelled to sing for his daily bread at the doors of the citizens. He relates the following story of his experiences at that time: "During the Christmas holidays we made excursions into the neighboring villages and sang at the doors the Christmas carols in four parts in order to obtain our living. At one time a peasant came out of his house and called to us in a rough tone of voice, 'Boys, where are you?' This so terrified us that we scattered in all directions. We were so frightened that we did not notice the sausage in his hand, and it required no little coaxing to recall us."

While at Magdeburg Luther was taken sick with a violent and distressing fever. Although he suffered great thirst he was forbidden to drink water. But on a certain Friday, when all had gone to church, his thirst became so unendurable that he crept upon his hands and knees into the kitchen, seized a vessel filled with fresh water, and drank it with great relish. Then he dragged himself back

to his bed, went soundly to sleep, and when he awoke the fever was gone.—Lack of support forced him to leave Magdeburg at the end of the year.

**2. Luther in Eisenach.** After a short stay under the parental roof Luther complied with the wish of his parents and attended the high school at Eisenach. His mother had many relatives there, and hoped that they would do something for poor Martin. But these hopes were disappointed, and, therefore, at Eisenach also he lived in great poverty. Again he had to gain his daily bread by singing and saying prayers before the houses. The gifts so received were called particles, that is, crumbs. In after-years Luther said: "I have also been such a beggar of 'particles,' taking my bread at the doors, especially in Eisenach, my beloved city." At times, however, his poverty so depressed him that he determined to return to his parents and help his father in the mines. But at last God graciously provided for him. For some time already his earnest singing and praying had won for him the heart of a pious matron, Frau Cotta. One day, therefore, when, together with other scholars, he was again singing at her door she took him into her house and gave him a place at her table. Thus by God's wonderful providence he was relieved of this care for his daily bread and could now joyfully devote himself entirely to his studies. Luther never forgot his benefactress, Mrs. Cotta, and in later years, when her son studied at Wittenberg, he received him into his house.

Luther delighted in attending the Latin school at Eisenach. He was especially fond of the principal of the school, John Trebonius, who treated his scholars with the greatest love and consideration. Upon entering the school-room he would remove his academical cap, and did not replace it till he had taken his seat at the desk. To the other teachers he said, "Among these young pupils sit

some of whom God may make our future mayors, chancellors, learned doctors, and rulers. Although you do not know them now, it is proper that you should honor them."



**Frau Cotta Taking Luther into Her Home.**

Luther outranked all his fellow pupils, and when, at one time, the celebrated Professor Trutvetter of Erfurt visited Eisenach Luther, being the most fluent Latin orator of the school, was called upon to deliver the address of welcome.



After the reception Trutvetter said to Trebonius, "Sir, you have a good school here. It is in excellent condition. Keep an eye on that Luther. There is something in that boy. By all means, prepare him for the university and send him to us at Erfurt." Thereupon he patted Luther on the back and said, "My son, the Lord has bestowed special gifts upon thee; use them faithfully in His service. When thou art ready and wishest to come to us at Erfurt remember that thou hast a good friend there, Doctor Jodocus Trutvetter. Appeal to him, he will give thee a friendly reception."

**3. Luther in Erfurt.** At the expiration of four years Luther finished his studies at Eisenach and, in 1501, seventeen years of age, he matriculated at the celebrated university at Erfurt, where he found a fatherly friend in Trutvetter. God had now so blessed his father's persevering diligence and economy that Luther had to suffer no want at Erfurt. In later years Luther said in praise of his father: "He supported me at the University of Erfurt with great love and fidelity, and by his arduous labor he helped me to attain my present position." His father wished Martin to become a jurist, wherefore Luther zealously devoted himself to the study of jurisprudence. Although he was naturally of a wide-awake and cheerful disposition he, nevertheless, began his studies every morning with fervent prayers and attendance at mass. His motto was: Diligent prayer is the half of study. Here at Erfurt, in the library, he found the book of all books, the Bible, which he had never seen before. He was surprised to see that it contained more than the Epistles and Gospels which were usually read at church. While turning the leaves of the Old Testament he happened upon the story of Samuel and Hannah. He read it hurriedly with great interest and joy, and wished that God might some day give him such a book and make of him such a pious Samuel. This wish

was abundantly fulfilled—it is true, after enduring manifold tribulations and trials.

While at the university Luther was seized with a severe illness and he thought he was about to die. An old priest came to see him and comforted him with these words: "My dear bachelor, be of good cheer. You will not die of this illness. God will yet make a great man of you, who will comfort many people. For whom God loveth and whom He would make a blessing to his fellow men, upon him He early lays the cross; for in the school of affliction patient people learn much." Luther, however, soon forgot this comfort. Not long after this, while on a journey to his home with a companion, and not far from Erfurt, he accidentally ran his rapier, which after the custom of the students hung at his side, into his leg, severing the main artery. His friend hurried back to call a physician. In the mean time Luther endeavored to stanch the flow of blood lying on his back, compressing the wound. But the limb swelled frightfully, and Luther, beset with mortal fear, cried out, "Mary, help me!" In the following night the wound began to bleed afresh, and again he called upon Mary only. Later in life he said: "At that time, I would have died trusting in Mary." Not long after, death suddenly robbed him of a good friend, and this also tended to increase his melancholy. In such periods of depression he would often exclaim, "Oh, when wilt thou become really pious and atone for thy sins, and obtain the grace of God?" With increasing power he then heard a voice within him saying: Over there rise the peaceful walls of the Augustinian cloister; they are beckoning you and saying, Come to us! Here, separated from the noise of the world, your trembling soul will find rest and peace. What was he to do?—For the sake of recreation Luther, in 1505, paid a visit to his parents. Upon his return, in the vicinity of Erfurt, a terrible storm suddenly broke upon him. The lightning, followed by a

fearful crash of thunder, struck close beside him, and, overcome and stunned, he fell to the ground, crying out, "Help, dear St. Ann, I will immediately become a monk!" For it was only in this manner that he hoped to appease God and to find peace and rest for his soul.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Luther in the Cloister.

**1. Entrance into the Cloister.** Luther erroneously felt himself bound in conscience to keep his vow, and therefore, on July 15, 1505, once more invited his intimate friends to meet him, in order to bid them farewell. They passed the time with song and instrumental music. As Luther seemed to be happy and in the best of spirits no one dreamed of what was passing in his soul. But before his friends parted from him he informed them of his intention. At first they thought he was joking, and laughed at him. But when Luther once more solemnly declared, "To-day you see me, and never again," they urgently besought him to give up his resolution. All their endeavors, however, were in vain, Luther remained firm. On the evening of the 17th of July, therefore, they weepingly escorted him to the gate of the Augustinian cloister within whose dark walls Luther now sought rest and peace for his soul. When his father was subsequently asked to give his consent he became very indignant that his son had entered the cloister. On a later occasion, when Hans Luther paid his son a visit at Erfurt and those about him praised his present monastic state, the father said: "God grant that it may not be a deception and Satanic illusion. Why, have you not heard that parents should be obeyed, and that nothing should be undertaken without their knowledge and advice?" After some time, however, he was somewhat pacified by his friends and said, "Let it pass; God grant that good may come of it."

**2. Disappointments in the Cloister.** Luther was scrupulously exact in the performance of every work and penance prescribed by the cloister. He acted as doorkeeper, set the clock, swept the church, yes, he was even compelled



**Luther Entering the Cloister.**

to remove the human filth. The greatest hardship for him, however, was to travel the streets of the city with a bag, begging for alms. The monks told him, "It is begging, not studying, that enriches the cloister." And yet Luther found time for diligent study of the Bible. He learned to

know the page and exact place of every verse of the Scriptures, and he even committed to memory many passages from the prophets, although he did not understand them at that time. The prior of the cloister, Dr. John Staupitz, came to love him, released him from menial labors, and encouraged him to continue in the diligent study of Holy Scriptures. Others thought different and said to Luther, "Why, Brother Martin, what is the Bible! You ought to read the old fathers, they have extracted the substance of truth from the Bible. The Bible causes all disturbances."

Thus Luther soon learned that the piety of most monks was nothing but pretense. In later years he wrote: "The monks are a lazy, idle people. The greatest vanity is found in the cloisters. They are servants of their bellies, and filthy swine." But if others sought carnal lust in the cloister Luther led a most rigid and holy life. In the simplicity of his heart he sincerely worshiped the Pope. He regarded Huss as a terrible heretic, and he considered the very thought of him a great sin. And yet he could not resist the temptation to read this heretic's sermons. He confessed: "I really found so much in them that I was filled with consternation at the thought that such a man had been burned at the stake who could quote the Scriptures with so much faith and power. But because his name was held in such horrible execration I closed the book and went away with a wounded heart."

In 1507 Luther was ordained to the priesthood, which made him very happy, for he supposed that now, as a priest, he could please God with greater and more glorious works. So thoroughly was Luther enslaved in the bondage of popery. Who could break these fetters? By his own works Luther endeavored to gain the grace of God. Day and night he tortured and tormented himself with fasting and prayers, with singing and studying, hard bed-



ding, freezing, and vigils, with groanings and weepings. He wanted to take heaven by storm. He could afterward truthfully say: "It is true, I was a pious monk, and if ever a monk could have gained heaven by his monkery I would have gained it. If it had lasted any longer I would have tortured myself to death with vigils, prayers, reading, and other works." The peace of his soul, however, which he had not found in the world he found just as little in the cloister with all his works. Later on he describes his condition at that time in the following words: "Hangman and devil were in our hearts, and nothing but fear, trembling, horror, and disquiet tortured us day and night."

**3. Luther Finds Comfort.** Staupitz one day found Luther in great distress of spirit and said to him, "Ah, you do not know how salutary and necessary such trials are for you; without them nothing good would become of you. For God does not send them to you in vain. You will see that He will use you for great things." At another time Luther complained, "O my sin, my sin, my sin!" when Staupitz told him, "Christ is the forgiveness for *REAL* sins. He is a *real* Savior and you are a *real* sinner. God has sent His own Son and delivered Him up for us." When, because of great anxiety for his sins, he became sick, an old friar comforted him with these words, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin," and explained these words to mean: "It is not enough that you believe God forgives sins in general, for the devils also believe that. You must believe that your sins, your sins, your sins are forgiven. For man is justified by grace through faith." So, even at that time, a ray of light fell into Luther's soul benighted with the darkness of popery, and from this time on his favorite passage remained Romans 3, 28: "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law."

## CHAPTER IX.

**Luther as Teacher.****1. Luther Called to the University of Wittenberg.**

After three years spent in this cloister Luther was called upon the stage where his battle with popery was to be fought. In 1502 Elector Frederick of Saxony had founded the University of Wittenberg. He charged Staupitz with the selection of learned and able men for this school. One of those recommended for his learning and piety was the well-known Augustinian monk Luther, who now became professor at Wittenberg. As Staupitz urged him to remove at once to Wittenberg, Luther did not even find time to bid farewell to his friends at Erfurt. Moving caused him little trouble, for a begging friar has few possessions. And thus, on an autumn day of the year 1508, we see the pale and emaciated form of the 25 year old monk traveling the road from Erfurt and entering Wittenberg by the wooden bridge. He hurried through the long street to the Augustinian cloister, where he found shelter and lodging.

**2. Luther as Professor and Preacher.** In obedience to his superiors Luther at first lectured on philosophy although he would have preferred to teach theology. And this wish of his heart was soon granted. Already in 1509 he received permission to expound the Scriptures to the students. With joyful devotion he gave himself up to the study of the Bible and diligently searched for the ground of salvation. And, indeed, he very soon created such a sensation that Dr. Mellrichstadt exclaimed, "That monk will confound all the doctors, and introduce a new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman church, for he devotes himself to the writings of the prophets and apostles, and stands upon the Word of Jesus Christ." Thus God had led Luther to the Scriptures, and he made them his guiding star. He felt that they alone could give him what he sought: truth

and peace. Staupitz also tried to persuade him to preach, but Luther at first lacked courage. Finally, however, he consented and preached the Word of Christ in the little



**Elector Frederick the Wise.**

chapel of the cloister. Its appearance was very similar to the pictures which the artists paint of the stable at Bethlehem in which Christ was born. In such a poor, little church that man began to preach who was to thrill count-

less souls and point the way to true peace. Very soon citizens and students gathered in such numbers to hear him that the church could not hold them. He was then called to the large parish church of Wittenberg, whose doors were now thrown open to him. Here he had abundant opportunity to preach the Word of Life in his powerful sermons to many thousands of hearers.

**3. Luther in Rome.** By the study of the Bible and diligent preparation for his sermons Luther steadily grew in the knowledge of divine truth, and yet he was firmly held in the bondage of popery. He still considered the Pope the viceregent of Christ upon earth. When he was therefore directed to visit Rome in the interest of his order it filled his heart with greatest joy. For he hoped by this visit to the holy (?) city to find rest and comfort for his conscience. He had to make the journey on foot, and he took the pilgrim staff in hand, and together with a companion started out for Rome. They had no need of money, for shelter and lodging they found in the cloisters by the way. But Luther did not enjoy the journey, for the words kept ringing in his ears: "The just shall live by his faith." After a long journey through beautiful landscapes the way finally wound about a hillock, and before the eyes of the German monks lay the Roman plain where, on the banks of the Tiber, appeared the resplendent houses, churches, and fortresses of the city of Rome. How his heart must have leaped when, in the radiant glow of the evening sun, the city lay before him! He prostrated himself upon the ground, lifted his hands, and exclaimed, "Hail, holy Rome! Thrice holy because of the martyrs' blood that was shed in thee!"—In Rome Luther devoutly sought to satisfy the cravings of his heart. With what sincerity he went about this we see from his own words: "In Rome I was also such a crazy saint. I ran through all churches and caverns, and believed every stinking lie that had been fab-

ricated there. I even regretted at the time that my father and mother were still living, for I would have been so glad to have redeemed them from purgatory with my masses and other precious works and prayers." How revolting it must have been for him to see the priests read mass with such levity and get through hurry-skurry (*rips-raps*), as if they were giving a puppet show! Luther relates: "Before I reached the Gospel the priest beside me had finished his mass and called to me, 'Hurry up! Come away! Give the child back to its mother!'" So it happened that his faith in Rome began to waver more and more, and God again and again led him there where true comfort can be found. The following is an example. On the Place of St. John's there was a flight of stairs, called Pilate's Staircase, which was said to be the same on which our Savior went up and down before the palace of Pontius Pilate at Jerusalem. Now, while Luther was crawling up these steps, hoping in this way to reconcile God and atone for his sins, it seemed to him as if a voice of thunder was crying in his ears, "The just shall live by his faith!" Thus this passage more and more became the light which revealed to him the true way to heaven. This was his opinion of the so-called Holy City: "No one believes what villainy and outrageous sins and vices are practiced at Rome. You can convince no one that such great abominations occur there, if he has not seen and heard and experienced it himself." Thus Luther learned to know popery itself in Rome, and was, therefore, the better qualified to testify against it later on. He said: "I would not for a thousand florins have missed seeing Rome, for then I would always fear that I were wronging the Pope and doing him an injustice; but now we speak that which we have seen."

**4. Luther Is Made Doctor of Divinity.** After his return to Wittenberg Luther took up his work with renewed diligence. One day, while sitting with Staupitz under the



great pear tree in the cloister garden, his superior took his hand and said, "Brother Martin, I and all the brethren have concluded that you ought to become Doctor of Divinity." Luther was frightened and excused himself because of his youth, his need of further study, and, also, because of his weak and sickly body, and begged him to select a man more qualified than he was. But when his paternal friend continued to persuade him, he said, "Doctor Staupitz, you will take my life; I will not stand it three months." To this prophecy of approaching death Staupitz playfully remarked, "In God's name! Our Lord has important business on hand; He needs able men also in heaven. Now, if you die you must be His councilor up there." Finally, Luther submitted to the will of his superior and, on the 18th of October, 1512, Dr. Carlstadt with great solemnity bestowed upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. How important this was Luther himself points out when he says: "I, Doctor Martin, have been called and forced to become a doctor without my choice, purely from obedience. I had to accept the degree of doctor *and to swear and vow allegiance to my beloved Holy Bible, to preach it faithfully and purely.*" Luther, later on, often comforted himself with this vow, when the devil and the world sought to terrify him because he had created such a disturbance in Christendom.

Luther now devoted himself entirely to the study of the whole Bible, and by the power of the Holy Spirit he soon learned to distinguish between the Law and the Gospel. And it was only now that he clearly and fully understood the passage: "The just shall live by his faith." With great power he now confuted the error that man could merit forgiveness of sins by his own good works, and be justified before God by his own piety and civil righteousness. On the contrary, he clearly and pointedly showed that our sins are forgiven without any merit of our own,

for Christ's sake only, and that we accept this gift by faith alone. He proved that Scriptures alone can teach us to believe right, to live a Christian life, and to die a blessed death. Thus the light of the Gospel grew brighter and brighter in Wittenberg, and, after the long night and darkness, the eyes of many were opened. The beautiful close of a letter which Luther wrote in 1516 to an Augustinian monk is a proof of the clear knowledge, which he already had at that time, of eternal and saving truth. It reads: "My dear brother, learn to know Christ, the Crucified; learn to sing to Him; and, despairing of thyself, say, 'Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, art my righteousness, but I am Thy sin. Thou hast taken upon Thyself what is mine, and hast given me what is Thine.' Meditate devoutly upon this love of His, and thou wilt draw from it the sweetest comfort. For if we could gain peace of conscience by our own works and sufferings, why did He die? Therefore thou wilt find peace in no other way but by confidently despairing of thyself and thy works, and trusting in Him."

## CHAPTER X.

### Luther the Reformer.

**1. Papal Indulgences.** At that time the papal chair was occupied by Leo X. What this Pope believed we may gather from his words addressed to one of his bishops. He exclaimed, "What an immense sum have we made out of this fable about Christ!" Luther relates this of him: "He would amuse himself by having two clowns dispute before his table on the immortality of the soul. The one took the positive, the other the negative side of this question. The Pope said to him who defended the proposition, 'Although you have adduced good reasons and arguments, yet I agree with him who is of the opinion that we die like the beasts; for your doctrine makes us

melancholy and sad, but his gives us peace of mind!’” In order to raise the necessary funds for his pleasures and dissipations he published a general indulgence, pretend-



John Tetzel Selling Indulgences.

ing that he needed money to complete the building of St. Peter's at Rome. He commissioned Archbishop Albert of Mayence to sell these indulgences in Germany. This

dignitary was also excessively fond of the pomp and pleasures of life. He was to receive one-half the receipts of these indulgences. Albert, again, engaged monks who were to travel about Germany and sell the papal pardons.

Chief among these pardon peddlers was John Tetzel. He was a most impudent fellow who, because of his adulterous life, had at one time been condemned to be drowned in a sack. For his services he received 80 florins, together with traveling expenses for himself and his servants, and provender for three horses. These papal indulgences were held in high esteem by the people, wherefore Tetzel was everywhere given a pompous reception. Whenever he entered a town the papal bull was carried before him upon a gilded cloth. All the priests, monks, councilmen, school-teachers, scholars, men, and women went out in procession with candles, flags, and songs to meet him. The bells were tolled, the organs sounded, and Tetzel was accompanied into the church, where a red cross was erected bearing the Pope's coat of arms. In short, God Himself could not have been given a grander reception. Once in church, Tetzel eloquently extolled the miraculous power of the papal indulgences. He preached: "Whoever buys a pardon receives not only the forgiveness of his sins, but shall also escape all punishment in this life and in purgatory." The forgiveness for sacrilege and perjury was sold for 9 ducats, adultery and witchcraft cost two. In St. Annaberg he promised the poor miners, if they would freely buy his indulgence the mountains round about the city would become pure silver. The Pope, he claimed, had more power than all the apostles and saints, even more than the Virgin Mary herself; for all of these were under Christ, while the Pope was equal to Christ. The red cross with the papal arms erected in church was declared to be as saving as the cross of Christ. Tetzel claimed to have saved more souls with his indulgences than Peter

with his sermons. He had a little rhyme which ran: "As soon as the money rings in my chest, From purgatory the soul finds rest." Furthermore, he proclaimed that the grace offered by indulgences is the same grace by which man is reconciled with God. According to his teaching contrition, sorrow, or repentance for sin were unnecessary if his indulgences were bought.

**2. Consequences of this Pardon-Mongery.** After Tetzel had carried on his godless traffic at many places he also came to Jueterbock, in the vicinity of Wittenberg. Thither the people hurried from the whole neighborhood, and even from Wittenberg they came in crowds to buy indulgences. Luther relates: "At that time I was preacher here in the cloister, a young doctor, full of fire and handy at the Scriptures. Now, when great multitudes ran from Wittenberg to buy indulgences at Jueterbock and Zerbst, I began to preach very moderately that something better could be done than buying indulgences; that he who repents receives forgiveness of sins, gained by Christ's own sacrifice and blood, and offered from pure grace, without money, and sold for nothing." And when some of Luther's parishioners stubbornly declared that they would not desist from usury, adultery, and other sins, nor promise sincere repentance and improvement, he refused to absolve them. When they appealed to the indulgences which they had bought from Tetzel, Luther answered them: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13, 3. He now addressed an imploring petition to Albert of Mayence and other bishops, to put a stop to Tetzel's blasphemous doings, but met with no success. Tetzel himself threatened to accuse Luther of heresy, and built a pile of fagots on which, he said, all those should be burned who spoke against his indulgences.

**3. The Ninety-Five Theses.** It was on the 31st of October, 1517, when the bells ringing from the steeple of the



Castle Church at Wittenberg were calling the multitude into the house of God. The crowds were gathering in the long street, awaiting the beginning of the service which usually preceded the festival of church dedication which



**Luther Nailing His Ninety-five Theses to the Castle Church of Wittenberg.**

occurred on All Saints' Day. Suddenly a man hurriedly pressed through the waiting multitude; lean and lank was his body, and pale his countenance, but his eyes beamed with life and fire. He stepped up to the door of the Castle Church, drew a paper from his dark monk's cowl, and with vigorous blows of the hammer nailed it to the church door.

At first his action was noticed only by those standing near by. When, however, one of the bystanders read the superscription which, translated into English, reads: "Disputation concerning the power of indulgences. Out of love for the truth and with a sincere desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, the Reverend Father Martin Luther presiding. Those who cannot discuss the subject with us orally may do so in writing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!"—then the cry was heard: "Up there! Read to us the tidings of the wonderful document."

#### SEVERAL OF THE THESES.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ in saying: "Repent ye," etc., intended that the whole life of His believers should be repentance.

32. Those who believe that through letters of pardon they may be sure of their salvation will go to hell, together with their teachers.

36. Every Christian who truly repents of his sin has complete remission of all pain and guilt, and it is his without any letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, living or dead, partakes of all the benefits of Christ and of the Church. God gives him this without letters of pardon.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God.

**4. The Effects of the Theses.** The action of the Augustinian monk created everywhere the greatest excitement among the people. Luther's theses spread with a rapidity truly marvelous for that time. In fourteen days they had passed through all Germany, and in four weeks through all Christendom. Verily, it seemed as if the angels themselves had been the messengers. The theses were translated into other languages, and after four years

a pilgrim bought them in Jerusalem. Like distant rolling thunder the mighty sentences echoed out into the lands and announced to Rome the storm that was brewing in Germany against popery. Luther had no idea that God had destined them to accomplish such great things. For innumerable souls they were as the sun rising after a long and anxious night. They rejoiced as we rejoice at the light of day; for they saw that in the light of this doctrine they could attain to that peace with God and with their conscience which they had sought in vain with painful toiling in the commandments of the Roman church. In the name of these souls old Doctor Fleck exclaimed, "Aha! He'll do it! He is come for whom we have waited so long!" Another confessed, "The time has come when the darkness in churches and schools will be dispelled." And another exulted, "Praise God, now they have found a man who will give them so much toil and trouble that they will let this poor man depart in peace." But, of course, there were also timid souls who were filled with anxious concern for Luther. The renowned Dr. Kranz, for instance, in Hamburg, cried out, "Go to your cell, dear brother, and pray, 'Lord, have mercy upon me!'" and an old Low-German clergyman said, "My dear Brother Martin, if you can storm and annihilate purgatory and popish huckstering, then you are indeed a great man!" But Luther, full of joyous courage and faith, replied to all such timid souls, "Dear fathers, if the work is not begun in God's name, it will soon come to naught; but if it is begun in His name let Him take care of it."

## CHAPTER XI.

### Luther the Mighty Warrior.

**1. Luther Before Cajetan in Augsburg.** Pope Leo X at first treated the affair with contempt, thinking that the quarrel would soon die out. He once said, "Brother Martin

has a fine head, and the whole dispute is nothing else than an envious quarrel of the monks." At another time he said, "A drunken German has written these theses; when



Luther Before Cajetan.

he sobers up he will think differently of the matter." But when he noticed that his authority was endangered, because many pious souls became attached to the true doctrine, he summoned Luther to appear within sixty days in Rome.

and give an account of his heresy. If Luther had obeyed, he would hardly have escaped death or the dungeon, for everyone knew that Rome was like the lion's cave into which many prints of feet entered, but from which none returned. But under the merciful guidance of God Elector Frederick the Wise so arranged matters that Luther's case was tried in Germany. For this purpose the Pope sent Cardinal Cajetan to Augsburg, and in spite of all warnings Luther also boldly repaired to that city. In Weimar a monk said to him, "O my dear Doctor, I fear that you will not be able to maintain your case before them, and they will burn you at the stake." Luther answered, "They may do it with nettles; but fire is too hot!" When Luther finally arrived in Augsburg, weary and worn, he would have called upon the cardinal immediately, but to this his friends were opposed; they endeavored to obtain for him, first of all, safe-conduct from the emperor. But three days passed before he received it. In the meantime the servants of the cardinal came and said, "The cardinal offers you every favor. What do you fear? He is a very kind father." But another whispered in his ear, "Don't believe it, he never keeps his promise." The third day an emissary, by the name of Urban, came to Luther and asked him why he did not come to the cardinal who was waiting for him so graciously. Luther told him that he was following the advice of upright men who were all of the opinion that he should not go there without the imperial safe-conduct. Evidently vexed at this reply, Urban asked, "Do you think that the elector will go to war on your account?" Luther answered, "I do not ask that at all." Urban: "Where do you intend to stay then?" Luther: "Beneath the heavens!" Urban: "What would you do if you had the Pope and the cardinals in your power?" Luther: "I would show them every mark of respect!" When the safe-conduct finally arrived Luther at once repaired to the cardinal, who ab-



ruptly demanded that he recant his errors. But Luther declared, "I cannot recant, I cannot depart from the Scriptures." After lengthy negotiations Cajetan sprang up in anger and said, "Go, and let me not see you again, unless you recant!" To Luther's friends the cardinal said, "I do not wish to dispute with that beast any more, for he has deep eyes and strange ideas in his head." Luther, however, wrote to Wittenberg: "The cardinal is a poor theologian or Christian, and as apt at divinity as an ass is at music." On the 31st of October Luther returned safely to Wittenberg.

**2. Luther Before Miltitz.** Rome would now have preferred to excommunicate Luther, but for good reasons it did not wish to offend the elector, who was determined not to allow his professor to be condemned without proper trial and refutation. The Pope therefore sent his chamberlain Karl von Miltitz to the elector to present to him a consecrated golden rose. By this means the elector was to be made willing to assist Miltitz in his undertaking. But when the latter arrived in Germany he noticed at once that he would have to deal kindly with Luther if he wished to retain the good will of the people. At the meeting which occurred 1519 in Altenburg, Miltitz, therefore, treated Luther with the greatest consideration: "Dear Martin, I thought you were an old doctor who sat behind the stove full of crotchety notions. But I see that you are a young and vigorous man. Besides, you have a large following, for on my journey I made inquiries to discover what the people thought of you, and I noticed so much that where there is one on the Pope's side there are three on yours against the Pope. If I had an army of 25,000 men I would not undertake to carry you out of Germany!" With tears he begged Luther to help in restoring peace. Luther consented to drop the controversy if his opponents would do the same. After supping together they parted

on the best of terms, Miltitz even embracing and kissing Luther. Later on Luther saw through the deceit of the Roman and called his kiss a Judas kiss and his tears crocodile tears; for it was only his fear of Luther's following that prevented him from executing his original plan of carrying Luther to Rome in chains.

**3. Luther and Dr. Eck in Leipzig.** Dr. Eck, a violent opponent of Luther, became involved in a dispute with Dr. Carlstadt on several questions of Christian doctrine into which Luther was also drawn. In 1519 these three men gathered at Leipzig for a public disputation. At first Eck disputed with Carlstadt on "Free Will," and then with Luther on the supremacy of the Pope. Luther proved that the church indeed needed a supreme head, but that Christ is this head, and not the Pope, and that the power which the Pope arrogates to himself conflicts with the Scriptures and the history of the first three centuries. As Eck could not maintain his position he accused Luther of Hussite heresy. When Luther replied, "My dear Doctor, not all of Huss' teachings are heretical," Eck flew into a passion, and Duke George cried out, "The plague take it!" Then they debated the question of purgatory, of indulgences, of penances, and the allied doctrines. On the 16th of June they closed the debate, and Luther returned joyfully to Wittenberg. Eck, who had flattered himself that he would triumph over Luther, had to leave in disgrace.

**4. The Bull of Excommunication.** Soon hereafter Eck journeyed to Rome and persuaded the Pope to threaten Luther with excommunication. And indeed! in 1520 the papal bull appeared which began: "Arise, O Lord, judge Thy cause, for a boar has broken into Thy vineyard, a wild beast is destroying it." Luther's doctrine was condemned, and his books were to be burned that his memory might perish among Christians. He himself was commanded to recant within sixty days, on pain of excommunication

as a heretic. As a dried limb is cut from the trunk of the tree they threatened to cut Luther from the body of Christ. Triumphantly Dr. Eck carried the bull about in Germany. In Erfurt the students tore it to pieces and threw it into the water, saying, "It is a *bull* (bubble), so let it swim upon the water." Luther wrote a pamphlet:



**Luther Burning the Pope's Bull.**

"Against the Bull of the Antichrist," and had it distributed broadcast among the people. In it he said: "If the Pope does not retract and condemn this bull, and punish Dr. Eck besides, then no one is to doubt that the Pope is God's enemy, Christ's persecutor, Christendom's destroyer, and the true Antichrist." He wrote to a friend: "I am much more courageous now, since I know that the Pope

has become manifest as the Antichrist and the chair of Satan."

And now when Luther even learned that in accordance with this bull his writings had been burned in Louvaine, Cologne, and also in Mayence, his purpose was fixed. On the 10th of December he had the following announcement published on the blackboard in Wittenberg: "Let him who is filled with zeal for evangelical truth appear at nine o'clock before the Church of the Holy Cross without the walls of the city. There the ungodly books of the papal statutes will be burned, because the enemies of the Gospel have dared to burn the evangelical books of Dr. Martin Luther." When the students read this notice they gathered in crowds in the streets and marched out through the Elster Gate, followed by many citizens. At nine o'clock Luther appeared in company with many professors and scholars, who were carrying books and pamphlets. A pile of fagots was erected. Luther with his own hand laid upon it the papal books, and one of the masters set fire to the pile. When the flames leaped up Luther's firm hand threw in the papal bull, and he cried, "Since thou hast offended the Holy One of God, may everlasting fire consume thee!" On the next day he said to his audience: "If with your whole heart you do not renounce the kingdom of the Pope you cannot be saved." In a pamphlet he pointed out the reasons which induced him to take this step, and at the same time he called attention to the impious statutes contained in the popish jurisprudence. Some of these read: "The Pope and his associates are not bound to obey God's commandments. Even if the Pope were so wicked as to lead innumerable men to hell, yet no one would have the right to reprove him."—On the third of January, 1521, another bull appeared in which the Pope excommunicated Luther and his adherents, whom he called "Lutherans," and issued the interdict against every place where they resided.

## CHAPTER XII.

**Luther the Staunch Confessor.****1. Luther Cited to Appear at the Diet at Worms.**

In 1521 Charles V held his first diet at Worms. Among other matters Luther's case was also to be discussed. The elector therefore asked Luther whether he were willing to appear at the diet. Luther answered: "If I am called, I shall, as far as I am concerned, go there sick if I cannot go there well, for I dare not doubt that God calls me when my emperor calls. You may expect everything of me save flight or recantation: I will not flee, much less will I recant. May the Lord Jesus help me!" On the 26th of March the imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, who was to act as Luther's safe-conduct, arrived in Wittenberg and delivered to him the emperor's citation according to which Luther was to appear at the diet within twenty-one days. Friends reminded Luther of the danger awaiting him, fearing that he would be burned like Huss. But Luther replied: "And if my enemies kindle a fire between Wittenberg and Worms reaching up to heaven, yet will I appear in the name of the Lord, step into the very mouth and between the great teeth of the devil, confess Christ, and let Him have full sway." Upon the journey Luther became dangerously ill; his enemies also tried to keep him away from Worms. But filled with faith and courage, he declared: "Christ liveth! Therefore we will enter Worms in spite of the gates of hell, and in defiance of the Prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2, 2). And when even his friend Spalatin begged him not to go to Worms Luther answered: "If there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs, yet I would enter it."

**2. Luther's Entrance into Worms.** On the 16th of April, 1521, the watchman upon the cathedral spire at Worms gave the trumpet signal, announcing the approach of a cavalcade. At its head rode the herald wearing the



imperial eagle on his breast. Luther, dressed in his monk's cowl, followed in an open wagon surrounded by a great number of stately horsemen, some of whom had joined him on the way, while others had gone from Worms to meet him. A surging mass of people gathered and pressed about the wagon. In boundless joy men and women, old and young cheered him, and blessed the day on which they had



Luther's Entrance into Worms.

been permitted to see the man who had dared to break the fetters of the Pope, and to deliver poor Christianity from his bondage. On stepping from his wagon at his lodging place Luther said, "God will be with me!" On the same day Luther received many of the counts and lords that waited upon him late into the night. The Landgrave of Hessa also came to see him. Upon leaving this nobleman shook his hand and said, "If you are in the right, Doctor,

may God help you!" The partisans of the Pope pressed the emperor to do away with Luther and have him executed like Huss. But Charles said, "A man must keep his promise." Luther spent the night in prayer to strengthen himself for the ordeal of appearing before the emperor and the assembled diet.

**3. Luther Before the Diet.** Early the next morning the marshal of the empire came to Luther and delivered to him the imperial order to appear before the diet at four o'clock that afternoon. The decisive hour was drawing nigh in which this faithful witness of Jesus Christ was to stand before the great and mighty of this earth, to profess a good profession before many witnesses. At the time specified Luther was escorted into the council chamber. Immense crowds had gathered in the streets. Many of them had even climbed on the roofs, in order to see the monk, who, therefore, was forced to take his way through hidden paths, gardens, and sheds, in order to reach the assembly. When entering the hallway the celebrated old General George von Frundsberg patted him on the shoulder and said, "Monk, monk! you are now upon a road the like of which I and many another captain have never gone in our most desperate encounters; but if you are sincere and sure of your cause go on in the name of God and be of good cheer, God will not forsake you." Then the door was opened, and Luther stood before the mighty of this earth. Perhaps never before had there been such a numerous and august assembly. The council chamber was crowded, and about 5000 people had gathered in the vestibules, upon the stairways, and at the windows.

The first question put to Luther was, whether he acknowledged the books lying upon the bench to be his own, and whether he would retract their contents, or abide by their teachings. Luther could not be prepared to answer this question, for the imperial citation had only mentioned

a desire to be informed as to his doctrine and books. After Luther had examined the title of all of the books he answered the first question in the affirmative. As to the second question, however, whether he would recant, he declared that he could not answer this at once, since it was a matter that concerned faith, salvation, and the Word



Luther Before the Emperor and the Diet.

of God, the greatest treasure in heaven and on earth, on which he must be careful not to speak unadvisedly. He therefore asked the emperor to grant him time for reflection. This request was granted, and the herald conducted him back to his lodgings. On Thursday, April 18, he was called again. He had to wait nearly two hours, wedged in the throng, before he was admitted. When he finally en-

tered the lights were already lit and the council chamber brilliantly illuminated. He was now asked whether he would defend his books, or recant. Luther replied at length, declaring humbly but with great confidence and firmness that by what he had written and taught in singleness of heart he had sought only the glory of God and the welfare and salvation of Christians. He cited the word of Christ: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil," John 18, 23, and prayed that they convince and convict him from the writings of the prophets and apostles. If this were done he would at once be ready and willing to retract every error, and be the first to cast his own books into the fire. Hereupon the imperial spokesman addressed him in harsh tones and told him that they wished a simple and clear answer, whether or no he would recant. Distinctly and plainly Luther then replied: "Since your Imperial Majesty desires a clear, simple, and precise answer I will give you one which has neither horns nor teeth: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, or by patent, clear, and cogent reasons and arguments (for I believe neither the Pope nor the councils alone, since it is evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), and because the passages adduced and quoted by me have convinced and bound my conscience in God's Word, therefore I cannot and will not recant, since it is neither safe nor advisable to do anything against conscience. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise! God help me! Amen."

About eight o'clock in the evening the session was closed, and two men led Luther away. While he was still in the throng Duke Eric of Brunswick sent him a silver flagon of Eimbeck beer, with the request that he would refresh himself. Luther drank it and said, "As Duke Eric has now remembered me, so may our Lord Jesus Christ remember him in his last hour." At the same time Luther

was of good courage. When he arrived at his inn, where many friends were awaiting him, he cried with lifted hands and beaming face, "I am through! I am through!" He also said, "If I had a thousand heads I would rather lose everyone of them than recant." By the courageous and steadfast confession of Luther many were won for his cause. The emperor, however, exclaimed, "He will not make a heretic of me!" But when the partisans of the Pope tried to persuade the emperor to break his promise of safe-conduct he said with great solemnity, "A man must keep his word, and if faith is not found in all the world it ought to be found with the German emperor." The elector said to Spalatin, "O how well Martin conducted himself! What a beautiful address he delivered both in German and Latin before the emperor and all the estates. To me he appeared almost too bold!" According to an order of the diet several more attempts were made within the following days to induce Luther to recant. Luther, however, remained steadfast, and again and again requested, "Convince me from the Scriptures," and appealed to the words of Gamaliel: "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it."

**4. Luther's Homeward Journey.** Together with several friends Luther, on the 26th of April, left Worms after the emperor had again granted him safe-conduct for twenty-one days. The imperial herald, Caspar Sturm, accompanied him to Friedberg. At this place Luther dismissed him with a letter to the emperor in which he returned thanks for the safe-conduct. Although the emperor had forbidden it, nevertheless Luther preached to large audiences at Hersfeld and Eisenach. He also visited his relatives in Moehra and preached there under a linden tree, near the church. On the 4th of May he continued his journey, his relatives accompanying him to the castle Altenstein. There they separated. After a little while the wagon



turned into a narrow pass. Suddenly armed horsemen dashed out of the forest, fell upon the wagon, and amid curses and threats commanded the driver to halt, and tore Luther from his seat. Without molesting the others they threw a mantle upon Luther, placed him upon a horse, and led him in zigzag through the forest. It was nearly midnight



Luther Made Prisoner.

when the drawbridge of the Wartburg fell and the castle received the weary horsemen within its protecting walls.

**5. Luther under the Ban.** A presentiment had told Elector Frederick the Wise what would come, and therefore he had sheltered the steadfast confessor from the brewing storm. On the 26th of May already an imperial order appeared which is known as the Edict of Worms. By it the ban of the empire was proclaimed against Luther and all

who would protect him. It declared: "Whereas Luther, whom we had invited to appear before us at Worms, has stubbornly retained his well-known heretical opinions, therefore, with the unanimous consent of the electors, princes, and estates of the empire, we have determined upon the execution of the bull as a remedy against this poisonous pest, and we now command everyone under pain of the imperial ban from the 14th day of this month of May not to shelter, house, nor give food or drink to aforesaid Luther, nor succor him by deed or word, secretly or publicly, with help, adherence, or assistance, but take him prisoner wherever you may find him, and send him to us securely bound. Also, to overpower his adherents, abettors, and followers, and to appropriate to yourselves and keep their possessions. Luther's poisonous books and writings are to be burned and in every way annihilated."

**6. Opinions on Luther's Disappearance.** Luther's sudden disappearance caused great excitement everywhere in Germany. His friends mourned him as dead, murdered by his enemies. His opponents rejoiced and spread the lie that the devil had carried him off. A Roman Catholic wrote to the Archbishop of Mayence: "We now have our wish, we are rid of Luther; but the people are so aroused that I fear we will hardly be able to save our lives unless we hunt him with lighted torches and bring him back." The celebrated painter Albrecht Duerer of Nuremberg, who from the beginning had rejoiced at Luther's words as the lark rejoices at the golden dawn of day, wrote in his diary: "Whether he still lives, or whether they have murdered him, I do not know; he has suffered this for the sake of Christian truth, and because he reprov'd antichristian popery. O God, if Luther is dead, who henceforth will purely preach to us the holy Gospel?"

**7. Luther at the Wartburg.** While poor Christendom mourned and wailed Luther sat upon the Wartburg

securely sheltered against the curses of the Pope and the ban of the emperor. For ten months he dwelled there, known as Knight George. In order not to be recognized he had to lay aside his monk's cowl, let his beard grow, and don the full dress of a knight. At first he was not even permitted to study, that his books might not betray him. He had to follow the knights and squires out into the forest, over hill and dale, upon the chase, and to gather strawberries. But wherever he went and wherever he stood he thought of his beloved Wittenberg and the condition of the church. Once at a hunt, when a poor little driven rabbit ran into his sleeve and the hounds came and bit it to death, he said, "Just so Pope and Satan rage, that they may kill the saved souls and frustrate my endeavors." In his quiet retreat he studied Holy Scriptures, wrote sermons upon the Gospels, and translated the New Testament into German.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Fanatics and the Peasants' War.

**1. Disturbances at Wittenberg.** The sound of the glorious Gospel had gone out through all the lands. Satan indeed had tried to suppress it in every way, by help of Pope, emperor, and learned men, but it had spread only the more. Then the devil chose another means to suppress the truth by creating schisms and offenses in Luther's own congregation. During Luther's absence the Augustinian monks at Wittenberg had abolished the papal mass and again introduced the right manner of celebrating Holy Communion. But Dr. Karlstadt was not satisfied, and, besides, the Reformation progressed too slowly for him. He therefore instigated the students to break into the church where the priests were reading mass and drive them and the people out in the most brutal and violent manner,

During the Christmas holidays they threw the images out of the church and burned them. Then they demolished the altars and crucifixes, abolished the candles, liturgy, and ceremonies, and even rejected the use of chalice and paten. Without preparation or announcement they went to Holy Communion, and took the wafers with their own hand. All this they did from sheer presumption, without previously instructing the people nor caring whether the weak were offended. Moreover, certain fanatics from Zwickau came to Wittenberg who boasted that an audible voice of God had called them to preach, and that they held intimate conversation with God, and knew the future. They especially raved against infant baptism, and declared it to be of no avail. They demanded that everyone baptized in his infancy must be baptized again. For this reason these fanatics were also called Anabaptists.

**2. Luther's Return to Wittenberg.** Luther at first tried to allay these disturbances by writings, but in vain. Things grew worse. His congregation earnestly entreated him in a letter to come to Wittenberg and check further desolation. He decided to leave immediately and announced this fact to his friends in a letter. Certain of victory, he wrote: "I do not doubt that without a thrust of sword or drop of blood we will easily quench these two smoking fire brands." Thus Luther left the castle which was to shelter him against the ban of the Pope and the interdict of the emperor, and, contrary to the advice of the elector, appeared again in the arena. In a letter he excused himself to the elector and said: "If we would have the Word of God, it must needs be that not only Hannas and Caiphas rage, but that Judas also appear among the apostles, and Satan among the sons of God. As to myself, I know that if matters stood at Leipzig as they do at Wittenberg I would ride into it even though for nine days it rained nothing but Duke George's, and each one were nine

times more furious than this one. I go to Wittenberg protected by One higher than the elector. Yes, I would protect your Electoral Grace more than you can protect me. The sword cannot counsel nor help this cause; God alone must help here, without all human care or aid. Therefore, whoever believes most can here afford most protection."

**3. Luther's Sermons against the Fanatics.** On the 6th of March, 1522, Luther arrived in Wittenberg. For eight days in succession he preached against the prevailing nuisances, opposed the fanaticism of Karlstadt powerfully with the Word of God, and restored the peace of the church. He told his hearers that they had wanted the fruit of faith, which is love and which patiently bears the weakness of its neighbor, instructs him in meekness, but does not snarl at and insult him. External improvements are very well, but they must be introduced in due order, without tumult or offenses, and not too hastily. Again he says: "We must first gain the hearts of the people, which is done by the Word of God, by preaching the Gospel, and by convincing the people of their errors. In this way the Word of God will gain the heart of one man to-day, of another to-morrow. For with His Word God takes the heart, and then you have gained the man. The evil will die out and cease of itself." Karlstadt now remained quiet for a few years, and the prophets from Zwickau had to leave Wittenberg. Before going they wrote a letter to Luther full of abuse and curses.

**4. The Origin of the Peasants' War.** The Anabaptists now zealously spread the poison of their fanaticism among the people. Karlstadt also began again to proclaim his false doctrines. He maintained, infant baptism is wrong, study is superfluous, every Christian is fit to be a pastor, and that Christ's body and blood are not essentially present in the Lord's Supper. At many places such pernicious preaching caused the people to fall away from God's Word.



Their chief spokesman was Thomas Muenzer. He attacked Luther violently and boasted of himself, "The harvest is ripening; I am hired of heaven for a penny a day, and am sharpening my sickle for the reaping." He proclaimed a visible kingdom of God and of Christ, the New Jerusalem, where all earthly possession should be held in common. He also preached rebellion against the government. To check such disorder Luther himself traveled about and preached to the people. But he was only partially successful. In Orlamuende the rage of the people against him was so great that he had to flee at once, while some cursed after him, "Depart in the name of a thousand devils, and may you break your neck before you get out of the city!"

### **5. Luther's Sermon against the Revolting Peasants.**

The storm soon broke over Germany. In 1525 the flame of rebellion spread through Franconia, along the Rhine, and almost through all the German states. The peasants, "a wretched people, everybody's drudge, burdened and overloaded with tasks, taxes, tithes, and tributes, but on that account by no means more pious, but a wild, treacherous, uncivilized people," had banded together in a so-called Christian union and demanded of the government the granting of certain petitions. Some of these were: Every congregation is to be permitted to choose its own pastor; serfdom is to be abolished. Some of them demanded much more: they wanted one government for the whole German empire and the abolition of the minor princes. Luther declared that many of their demands were just and fair, at the same time, however, he told them how terribly they sinned by rebelling. He said: "Bad and unjust government excuses neither revolt nor sedition. Do not make your Christian name a cloak for your impatient, rebellious, and unchristian undertaking. Christians do not fight for themselves with the sword and with guns, but with the cross and with suffering, just as their Captain Christ did not use the sword,

but hung upon the cross." And with the same severity Luther also reproved the ungodly tyranny of the princes.

**6. The Outcome of the Peasants' War.** The flood of rebellion could no longer be checked. The peasants marched about, robbing, plundering, sacking, and murdering wherever they came, destroying more than 200 castles and many cloisters. Upon their enemies they took the most bloody vengeance. In Weinsberg they impaled and cruelly tortured 700 knights. Now Muenzer thought the time had come for him also. He sent letters in every direction: "Thomas Muenzer, servant of God with the sword of Gideon, calls all good Christians to his banners, that with him they may strike upon the princes like on an anvil, 'bing-bang!' and not allow their swords to cool from blood." Multitudes of the people gathered about him. Then Luther lifted his mighty voice for the last time, and advised the government to make the ringleaders a last offer of a peaceable compromise, and if this proved fruitless, to draw the sword. The compromise was offered, but in vain. Thereupon the princes took up the sword, and the peasants were routed everywhere. The decisive battle was fought at Frankenhausen. Muenzer encouraged his men to fight valiantly against the tyrants. He cried, "Behold, God gives us a sign that He is on our side. See the rainbow! It announces to us the victory! If one of you falls in the front ranks, he will rise again in the rear and fight anew. I will catch all bullets in my sleeve." The battle began. But when the peasants saw that the slain did not rise, and that Thomas Muenzer caught no bullets in his sleeve, they lost courage and fled. Five thousand remained on the field, and three hundred were made prisoners and beheaded. The braggart Muenzer was found in an attic of a house in Frankenhausen where he had hidden under a bed. He was dragged out and taken to Muehlhausen, where he was tortured and finally beheaded.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**The Colloquy at Marburg.**

**1. Zwingli.** At the same time that Luther issued his powerful theses against popery a man lived in Switzerland whose eyes had also been opened to the corruption of the church. This was Ulrich Zwingli, pastor at Zurich. He also wished to help the church, but did not abide by the pure Word of God. In many things he followed his own reason. Assisted by the city council he changed the church service at Zurich after his own fashion. The processions were abolished. Pictures, crucifixes, and altars were removed from the churches. Communion was celebrated in both kinds. The bread was carried about the church upon plates, and the wine in wooden chalices. Concerning Holy Communion Zwingli taught that the breaking and eating of the bread was a symbolic action. He maintained that the words of Christ, "This is my body," meant nothing but, "This represents my body." Of Baptism he likewise taught erroneously. Here also he followed his reason. He would not admit that the person baptized was in any way affected by Baptism; Baptism was to him only an external sign of membership among God's people. He taught many strange things concerning Christ's work of redemption, and called original sin a mere infirmity of human nature.

Of these false doctrines the one concerning Holy Communion spread rapidly and found many adherents. Earnestly and fervently Luther waged war against this error both in his sermons and in his writings. But the Zwinglians stubbornly adhered to their error and pursued their own way.

**2. The Colloquy at Marburg.** In 1529 Landgrave Philip of Hesse succeeded in arranging a colloquy between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians. It occurred on the first, second, and third of October, at Marburg. Before the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was taken up several other articles of faith were discussed. In these points the Zwing-

lians accepted instruction and counsel. When, finally, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper came to be discussed Luther took a piece of chalk from his pocket and wrote these words upon the table, "This is my body." These words were his sure, firm ground, and upon it he determined to stand unmoved. He demanded of his opponents to give all glory to God, and to believe the pure, simple words of the Lord. However, they clung to their opinion and cited especially John 6, 63, where Christ says: "The flesh profiteth nothing." Clearly and unmistakably Luther proved to them that in this passage Christ does not speak of His *own*, but of *our* flesh. It would also be an impious assertion, to say that Christ's flesh profiteth nothing. Then they maintained: "A body cannot at the same time be present at two places; now the body of Christ sitteth in heaven, at the right hand of the Father, consequently it could not be present upon earth in the sacrament." Luther replied: "Christ has assumed the human nature, which, therefore, according to the Scriptures, partakes of the divine attributes and glory. Wherefore the human nature of Christ is omnipresent; hence His body and blood is capable of being present in Holy Communion." When Luther saw that his opponents grew more stubborn in their opinion he closed the colloquy on his part. With the words, "You have a different spirit from ours," he refused the hand of fellowship offered him by Zwingli. Already in 1531 Zwingli perished in the battle of Kappel. The false doctrines, however, which he had spread have remained to this day the doctrines of the Reformed church.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Augsburg Confession.

**1. The Drafting of the Confession.** In 1530 Charles V assembled a diet at Augsburg. Contrary to common expectation his proclamation was very friendly, saying that

in this assembly all animosity was to be put aside and everyone's views were to be heard in all love and kindness. Elector John the Steadfast thereupon commissioned his theologians to draw up a brief and clear summary of the principal doctrines of evangelical truth, that he and his party might be ready to confess their faith and their hope in a clear and unmistakable manner. The theologians carried out this order and drew up a document upon the basis of 17 articles composed by Luther at an earlier date. In April of 1530 Elector John, together with Luther, Melancthon, Spalatin, Jonas, and Agricola, started off for Augsburg to fight a good fight. As the ban of the empire was still in force against Luther, and the city of Augsburg had protested against his coming, the elector had him taken to the fortress Coburg, on the morning of the 23d of April, that, in case of necessity, he might be near at hand. Luther complied, although very unwillingly. In order not to expose the elector to any danger the theologians requested him also to remain away, and offered to go to Augsburg alone and give an account of their teachings. But the elector answered courageously, "God forbid that I should be excluded from your company. I will confess my Lord Christ with you." Catholic estates, both spiritual and temporal lords, among them Dr. Eck and Faber, were traveling the same road. In Augsburg Melancthon again set to work, and in agreement with Luther and the other confessors completed the writing out of the confession. He then sent a copy of it to Luther at Coburg for inspection. When returning it Luther wrote: "I am well pleased with it, and cannot see that I could improve or change it; nor would it be proper for me to attempt this, for I cannot step so softly and gently. Christ, our Lord, grant that it may bring forth rich abundance of precious fruit. That is our hope and prayer. Amen." This is the origin of the confession which is known as the Augsburg Confession. It is a pure, cor-



rect, and irrefutable confession of the divine truths of Holy Scripture. Therefore it is also the holy banner around which all true Lutherans everywhere gather, and to this day the Lutheran church acknowledges only those as its members who accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in all its articles, without any exception.

**2. Heroism of the Lutheran Princes.** Slowly the emperor finally approached the city of Augsburg where the assembled estates were expectantly waiting for him. In great pomp he entered the city on the 15th of June, followed by his brother Ferdinand and many other princes. With amazement he at once noticed how great the contrast had grown in the nine years between the Catholics and the Protestants. For when at the entrance of the emperor the papal legate blessed the princes and all others kneeled down in the customary fashion the princes of Saxony and Hesse remained standing. And when, on the same evening, the emperor demanded of the evangelical princes that on the following day they should take part in the great Corpus Christi procession they declared that by their participation they were not minded to encourage such human ordinances which were evidently contrary to the Word of God and the command of Christ. Upon this occasion Margrave George of Brandenburg uttered these heroic words, "Rather than deny my God and His Gospel I would kneel here before your Imperial Majesty and have my head cut from my body." The emperor graciously replied, "Dear Prince, not head off! not head off!"

**3. Signing the Confession.** So the ever memorable day, the 24th of June, approached, on which the little band of Lutheran confessors were to confess the Lord Christ before the emperor and the diet. On the evening before Elector John invited his brethren in the faith to his lodgings. At the upper end of a long table sat the elector. He arose, and the rest followed him. In his hand was a

roll of manuscript. He seized a pen and subscribed his name with a firm hand. In doing so he said, "May Almighty God grant us His grace continually that all may redound to His glory and praise." In fervent words he admonished those present to stand firm, saying, "All counsels that are against God must fail, and the good cause will, without doubt, finally triumph." Now the others also signed the confession. After the Prince of Anhalt, a right chivalrous lord, had signed he cried with flashing eyes, "I have been in many a fray to please others, why should I not saddle my horse, if it is necessary, in honor of my Lord and Savior, and, sacrificing life and limb, hurry into heavenly life to receive the eternal crown of glory?" The meeting closed with a fervent prayer for blessing and success on the coming day.

Luther, in the mean time, remained at Coburg, but in spirit he participated in the holy cause at Augsburg. Every day he spent three hours in prayer for the victory of the beloved Gospel. He was continually crying to God to preserve the brethren in true faith and sound doctrine. In hours of anxiety and trial he wrote on the walls of his room with his own hands the precious words of the 118th Psalm: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." He addressed many consoling letters to the confessors in which he admonished them to constancy. At this time there lived in his own heart that trust in God which he had expressed in his heroic song, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

**4. Submittal and Reception of the Confession.** On Saturday, the 25th of June, 1530, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the diet assembled in the episcopal palace, where the confession was to be read. The German emperor presided, and the highest dignitaries of the Roman empire had gathered to hear the confession. Then the evangelical confessors arose cheerfully, and in their name the two

electoral chancellors, Dr. Brueck and Dr. Baier, stepped into the center of the room, the first with a Latin, the latter with a German copy of the confession. When the



Reading the Augsburg Confession.

emperor demanded that the Latin copy should be read, Elector John replied, "Upon German ground and soil it is but fair to read and hear the German tongue." The

emperor permitted it. And now Dr. Baier began to read in a loud and audible voice, so that even the assembled multitude without in the courtyard could plainly understand every word of the confession. Everyone was deeply touched by it. The learned Catholic Bishop of Augsburg publicly admitted, "Everything that was read is the pure, unadulterated, undeniable truth." Duke William of Bavaria pressed the hand of Elector John in a friendly manner and said to Dr. Eck, who was standing close by, "I have been told something entirely different of Luther's doctrine than I have now heard from their confession. You have also assured me that their doctrine could be refuted." Eck replied, "I would undertake to refute it with the fathers, but not with the Scriptures." Thereupon the duke rejoined, "I understand, then, that the Lutherans sit entrenched in the Scriptures, and we are on the outside." Luther wrote to one of his friends: "You have confessed Christ and offered peace. You have worthily engaged in the holy work of God as becometh the saints. Now for once rejoice in the Lord also and be glad, ye righteous. Look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." Spalatin said that such a confession had not been made since the world exists. Mathesius also aptly testifies, "There has not been a greater and higher work and a more glorious testimony since the days of the apostles than this at Augsburg before the whole Roman empire." Very soon the confession was translated in many different languages and spread in every land. Thereby many received true information on the Lutheran doctrine, recognized its entire agreement with Holy Scriptures and with the doctrine of the Apostolic Church, and joyfully accepted it as their own.

At the emperor's command the papal theologians at once drew up a paper in which they tried to refute the Augsburg Confession. This document, called Confutation,

proved to be such a miserable failure that it had to be returned for revision. Melancthon then wrote an excellent defense of the confession, the Apology, which, however, the emperor would neither receive nor permit to be read. He simply declared the case to be closed, and said, "If the evangelical princes will not submit, then I, the protector of the Roman church, am not disposed to permit a schism of the church in Germany."

Before the close of the diet he issued a severe edict which granted the evangelicals six months to consider matters and commanded them, before the expiration of this time, to return to the Catholic church. Thereupon the faithful confessors declared that, because they had not received a thorough refutation from the Word of God, they were determined to abide by the faith of the prophets and apostles, and everything else they would commend to the gracious will of God. When taking leave of the emperor, Elector John, rightly called the "Steadfast," spoke the memorable words, "I am sure that the doctrine contained in the Confession will stand even against the gates of hell." The emperor answered, "Uncle, Uncle, I did not expect to hear such words from your Grace. You will lose your electoral crown and your life, and your subjects will perish, together with their women and children."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Bible, Catechism, and Hymnbook.

**1. Bible.** Among the many priceless treasures for which all Christendom owes thanks, under God, to Luther, the translation of the Bible into German is one of the grandest and one of the most glorious. In the churches of that time Latin Bibles were used exclusively. The people, however, were not acquainted with them; for, in the first



place, laymen could not read them, and, in the second place, they were forbidden to read the Bible. In addition to this, the Bibles of that time were far too expensive. An ordinary Latin Bible cost 360 florins, and one nicely written out by monks even brought 500 dollars. It is true, there were German translations of the Bible even before Luther, but they were so inexact, and composed in such poor German, that the people could not use them. And yet, if every Christian was to read and learn the Gospel which Luther preached and proclaimed; if he was to convince himself from the Scriptures of the errors of popery; if he was effectively to arm himself against them; and if the Bible was to make him wise unto salvation, then he had to have it in his own language. Luther was long since convinced of this and had, therefore, already translated the seven Penitential Psalms. When, in 1521, the Wartburg sheltered him against his enemies, he, for the first, undertook the translation of the New Testament. He wrote: "Till Easter I will remain here in seclusion. By that time I will translate the Postil and New Testament into the people's language. That is demanded by our friends." After completing the work he wrote to Spalatin: "In my Patmos I had translated not only the Gospel according to John, but the entire New Testament. Now we are at it to polish the whole, Philip and I; God willing, it will prove a fine work." On the 21st of September, 1522, it appeared and sold at 1½ florins. Although the book was proscribed in many countries, the entire first edition was sold in a few weeks. In the same year several new editions had to be issued. Then Luther, with his friends, entered upon the translation of the whole Bible. It was a most difficult task. Luther said of it: "It frequently happened that we searched and inquired fourteen days, aye, three or four weeks for a single word, and yet, at times, did not find it." But God permitted him to complete the great work upon which,



The Translation of the Bible.

amid countless battles and labors, his heart had been set for many years. In 1534 the complete Bible appeared.

Great was the joy with which Luther's translation was received at that time. Melanchthon exclaimed, "The German Bible is one of the greatest miracles which God has

worked through Dr. Martin Luther before the end of the world." And Mathesius added, "For to an attentive Bible-reader it seems indeed as if the Holy Spirit had spoken through the mouth of the prophets and the apostles in our German language." Now many thousand thirsting souls could drink as often as they wished from that fountain closed so long, and which offers pure, sweet, and truly satisfying water. And they did it. Cochlaeus, a violent opponent of Luther, writes: "Luther's New Testament has been so multiplied by the printers and scattered in such numbers that even tailors and shoemakers, aye, even women and the simple who had learned to read only the German on ginger cakes, read it with intense longing. Many carried it about with them and learned it by heart, so that, in a few months, they arrogantly began to dispute with priests and monks on the faith and the Gospel. Indeed, even poor women were found who engaged with learned doctors in a debate, and thus it happened that in such conversations Lutheran laymen could extemporaneously quote more Bible passages than the monks and priests."

**2. Catechism.** Another treasure which God gave to Christianity through Luther is the Small Catechism. In order to inform himself on the condition of the churches and schools Luther had early urged the elector to order a general visitation of the churches. This visitation was held with loving heart, but with open eyes, from 1527 to 1529. In the vicinity of Wittenberg Luther and Melancthon traveled from city to city, from village to village, and inspected churches and schools. They listened to the preachers and examined the church members. They found things in a sad condition. The people and the pastors lived in deep spiritual ignorance, for under the rule of the Pope they had received no proper instruction in religion. In a village near Torgau the old pastor could scarcely recite the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; in another place the peasants did not know

a single prayer and even refused to learn the Lord's Prayer. Luther wrote: "Alas, what manifold misery I beheld! The common people, especially in the villages, know nothing at all of Christian doctrine; and many pastors are quite unfit and incompetent to teach. Yet, all are called Christians, have been baptized, and enjoy the use of the sacraments — although they know neither the Lord's Prayer nor the Creed nor the Ten Commandments, and live like the poor brutes and irrational swine." The following example illustrates how patiently Luther instructed such people. When, at one time, he was examining the poor peasants on the Christian Creed one of them, who had recited the First Article, being asked the meaning of "Almighty," answered, "I don't know!" Luther then said, "You are right, my dear man, I and all the doctors do not know what God's power and omnipotence is; but only believe that God is your dear and faithful father who will, can, and knows how to help you and your wife and children in every need."

Such misery induced Luther, in 1529, to write the Small Catechism for the instruction of poor Christendom. He himself says: "The deplorable destitution which I recently observed during a visitation of the churches has impelled and constrained me to prepare this Catechism or 'Christian Doctrine' in such a small and simple form." A learned doctor writes of this excellent little book: "The Small Catechism is the true Layman-Bible, which comprises the whole contents of Christian doctrine which every Christian must know for his salvation." Of all books in the world perhaps no other can be found that teaches the whole counsel of God for our salvation in such brief form and in such clear and pointed language. A truly popular book, it has cultivated the right understanding of the Gospel among the common people and unto this day proved of inestimable blessing. Very early Luther already could boast of the fruits of his work. In the following year he wrote to the

elector: "How gracious is the merciful God in granting such power and fruit to His Word in your country. You have in your country the very best and most able pastors and preachers, such as you can find in no other country of the world, who live so faithfully, piously, and peaceably. Tender youth, boys and girls, are growing up so well instructed in the Catechism and the Scriptures, that it makes me feel good to see how young lads and little girls can now pray, believe, and speak better of God and of Christ than formerly all institutes, cloisters, and schools."

**3. Hymns.** Another precious gift for which all Christians should thank Luther is the collection of his incomparable hymns and songs, so childlike and devout, so simple and yet so powerful. When introducing the Lutheran order of worship Luther took great pains that not only the pastors and choristers, but also the congregations might sing their hymns to God in heaven in their own mother's tongue. However, there were very few German hymns at that time fit to be used in divine worship. Luther, therefore, also undertook this work, and, in 1524, the first hymnbook appeared. It contained eight hymns set to music, four of which Luther had composed. The first evangelical church-hymn which Luther wrote was that glorious song, "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice." In it, from his own experience, he describes human misery, and then glorifies God's work of salvation. Then followed, "O God of Heaven, Look Down and See," and, "Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee." Both of these hymns are cries for help out of the depths of human misery in which the congregation and every penitent Christian raises his voice to God on high and is heard. Later on appeared hymns for the festive seasons: "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come;" "All Praise to Jesus' Hallowed Name;" "In Death's Strong Grasp the Savior Lay;" "Now Do We Pray God the Holy Ghost." Then, among many more: "Though in



the Midst of Life We Be;" "In Peace and Joy I Now Depart." Above all others towers his hymn of battle and triumph, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Especially powerful was the effect produced by Luther's hymns in those days. The people never wearied of singing them, and in very many places the Gospel was introduced by the triumphant power of the Lutheran hymns intoned by pious church members. The opponents complained, "The people sing themselves into this heretical church; Luther's hymns have misled more souls than all his writings and sermons." In Brunswick a priest complained to the duke that Lutheran hymns were sung even in the court's chapel. The duke, though also very bitter against Luther, asked, "What kind of hymns are they? How do they read?" The priest answered, "Your Grace, one of them is, 'May God Bestow on Us His Grace,'" whereupon the duke rejoined, "Why, is the devil to bestow his grace upon us? Who is to be gracious to us if not God?" Concerning the effect of Luther's hymns a friend writes: "I do not doubt that by the one little hymn of Luther, 'Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice,' many hundred Christians have received faith who never before heard the name of Luther; but the noble, dear words of this man so won their hearts that they had to accept the truth."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### Luther's Family Life.

**1. Luther Enters Holy Matrimony.** According to the Pope's doctrine all so-called religious, like the monks, nuns, and priests, dare not marry. Luther, on the contrary, proved from the Word of God that this doctrine is false, that matrimony is God's institution and honorable in all men. 'Tis true, of himself he declared: "I have no disposition to marry, because I may daily expect death as



Luther's Marriage with Katharine of Bora.

a heretic." But many of his friends urgently requested him for the sake of strengthening many weak hearts also to enter holy matrimony and thus confirm his doctrine by his action. His father also dearly wished to see his son

marry a pious wife. By God's help Luther was soon firmly resolved by his own action to testify before the world his own and the doctrine of Holy Scriptures that matrimony is pleasing to God. He was of good courage and exclaimed, "To spite the devil and to please my old father I will marry my Kate before I die." And later on he said, "By my own example I wished to confirm what I had taught, and because many were so timid although the Gospel shone so brightly God willed it and accomplished it."

On the 13th of June, 1525, Luther invited his friends Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Apel, and the painter Lucas Cranach, together with the latter's wife, to supper, and in their presence he entered holy matrimony with Katharine of Bora. Justus Jonas informed Spalatin of this joyous occurrence in these words: "Luther has married Katharine of Bora; yesterday I was present at the marriage; my soul was so deeply moved at the spectacle that I could not retain my tears. Since it is now done and God has willed it I sincerely wish this excellent and true man and dear father in the Lord all happiness. God is wonderful in His works and in His counsels."

**2. Training of the Children.** Luther's marriage with Katharine of Bora was blessed with six children, who were raised severely but piously. Luther enjoyed their company and delighted to watch them at play. When little Martin once played with a doll and in prattling said it was his bride Luther remarked, "So sincere and without wickedness and hypocrisy we would have been in paradise. Therefore children are the loveliest starlings and dearest little chatterboxes—they do and speak everything naturally and in the simplicity of their hearts." When he saw the boys, as children will do, quarrel and then again make peace, he said, "Dear Lord, how pleasing to Thee is such life and play of the children." When at one time they all with beaming eyes and glad expectation stood about the table

on which the mother had placed peaches and other fruit, he enjoyed the picture and said, "Whoever wishes to see the picture of one rejoicing in hope, has here a true portrait. O that we could look forward to judgment day with such joyous hope." When Luther, at another time, visited Melancthon, he found him in his study surrounded by his family. He was well pleased with this and said, "Dear Brother Philip, I praise you for finding things with you as they are with me at home, wife and children in your company. I have also given my little Johnnie a ride upon my knees to-day and carried my little Magdalene about upon her pillow and pressed her to my heart." When Luther returned home from a journey he never missed bringing something along for his children. At the same time he was very strict. At one time he would not allow his son John to come into his presence for three days, until he begged pardon for an offense. And when his mother interceded for him Luther said, "I would rather have a dead than a spoiled son." At another time he said, "I do not wish my son John treated with too much leniency; he must be punished and held to strict account." He was diligent in teaching his older children the Catechism and prayed with them the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer.

How lovely he could speak with his children is shown by the following letter, which he wrote when he was at Coburg to his little son John, who was then four years of age: "Grace and peace in Christ. My dear little son:—I am very glad to know that you learn your lessons well, and love to say your prayers. Keep on doing so, my little boy, and when I come home I will bring you something pretty from the fair. I know a beautiful garden, where there are a great many children in fine little coats, and they go under the trees and gather beautiful apples and pears, cherries and plums; they sing and run about, and

are as happy as they can be. Sometimes they ride about on nice little ponies, with golden bridles and silver saddles. I asked the man whose garden it is, 'What little children are these?' And he told me, 'They are little children who love to pray and learn, and are good.' Then I said, 'My dear sir, I have a little boy at home; his name is Johnny Luther; would you let him come into the garden too, to eat some of these nice apples and pears, and ride on these fine little ponies, and play with these children?' The man said, 'If he loves to say his prayers, and learn his lesson, and is a good boy, he may come. And Philip and Jocelin may come too; and when they are all together, they can play upon the fife and drum and lute and all kinds of instruments, and skip about and shoot with little crossbows.' He then showed me a beautiful mossy place in the middle of the garden, for them to skip about in, with a great many golden fifes, and drums, and silver crossbows. The children had not yet had their dinner, and I could not wait to see them play, but I said to the man, 'My dear sir, I will go away and write all about it to my little son, John, and tell him to be fond of saying his prayers, and learn well, and be good, so that he may come into the garden; but he has an aunt, Lena, whom he must bring along with him.' The man said, 'Very well, go write to him.' Now, my dear little son, learn to love your lessons, and to say your prayers, and tell Philip and Jocelin to do so too, that you may all come to the garden. May God bless you. Give Aunt Lena my love, and kiss her for me. A. D. 1530. Your dear father, Martin Luther."

**3. The Death of Magdalene.** How dearly Luther loved his children we can see from his pious and touching conduct during the sickness and death of his little daughter Magdalene. In the beginning of September, 1542, being then in her fourteenth year, she became ill. When she was now sick unto death she longed very much for her brother



John whom she loved most dearly. . He was then at school at Torgau. Luther at once sent a wagon there and wrote to Rector Krodel that he should send John home for a few



Luther at the Coffin of His Daughter Magdalene.

days. John found his sister still alive. The disease tortured the poor child for fourteen more days, and her father suffered very much with her. When the hope of recovery vanished more and more, Luther prayed, "Lord, I love

her very much and would like to keep her, but, dear Lord, since it is Thy will to take her away, I am glad to know that she will be with Thee." And when she lay a-dying he said to her, "Magdalene, my dear little daughter, you would like to remain with this your dear father, wouldn't you, but also gladly go to that Father?" The child answered, "Yes, dear father, as God wills!"

She died in his arms on the evening of the 20th of September, at nine o'clock. The mother was also in the same room, but at a distance from the bed because of her great sorrow. As she wept bitterly and was very sad Luther said to her, "Dear Kate, consider where she is going! She fares well indeed!" When they laid her in her coffin he said, "You dear little Lena, how happy you are! You will rise again and shine as the stars, yea, as the sun." To the bystanders he said, "In the spirit, indeed, I rejoice, but according to the flesh I am very sad. Such parting is very painful. It is very strange—to know that she is in peace and well off, and yet to be so sad!" The people who had come to the funeral to express their sympathy he addressed thus, "You ought to rejoice! I have sent a saint to heaven, yes, a living saint. O that we had such a death! Such a death I would accept this moment!" After the funeral Luther said, "My daughter is now taken care of both as to body and as to soul. We Christians have nothing to complain of, we know that it must be thus. We have the greatest assurance of eternal life; for God cannot lie who has promised it to us through and for the sake of His Son." Upon her grave he placed the following epitaph:

"I, Luther's daughter Magdalene, with the saints here sleep,  
And covered calmly rest on this my couch of earth;  
Daughter of death I was, born of the seed of sin,  
But by Thy precious blood redeemed, O Christ! I live."

**4. Home Life and Charity.** Elector John gave Luther the former cloister building as a residence. It was a

large house with a beautiful garden, close to the walls of the city. The narrow cloister cells were changed into large rooms. Here Kate, now, went to housekeeping. She was a faithful and saving housekeeper. Luther's income was very small; he received a salary of 200 florins. Withal he was very charitable toward the poor, and hospitable toward his visitors. Hardly a week passed that he entertained no guests. From all countries they came to Wittenberg, doctors and students, to see the man face to face who had accomplished such great things. Besides this, he was daily visited by friends and students. It was, therefore, no easy matter to manage the household with the meager salary. But his friends took care that under God's blessing he suffered no want, and Luther confessed: "I have a strange housekeeping indeed! I use up more than I receive. Although my salary is but 200 florins, yet every year I must spend 500 for housekeeping and in the kitchen, not to speak of the children, other luxuries, and alms. I am entirely too awkward. The support of my needy relatives and the daily calls of strangers make me poor. Yet I am richer than all popish theologians, because I am content with little and have a true wife."

The following are a few examples of Luther's charity: A student once came to him and complained with tears of his need. As Luther had no money he took a silver cup that was gilded within and said, "There, take that cup and go home in God's name." His wife looked at him and asked, "Are you going to give everything away?" Luther pressed the cup together in his strong hand and said to the student, "Quick, take it to the goldsmith, I do not need it." At another time a poor man asked him for assistance. Luther had no money, but took his children's savings and gave them to him. When his wife reproached him he said, "God is rich, He will give us more." A man exiled because of his faith asked him for alms. Luther had but one dollar

(called "Joachim"), which he had carefully saved. Without thinking long he opened his purse and called, "Joachim, come out! The Savior is here!"

Friends, students, doctors, and all kinds of admirers often sat at Luther's table. The meal was generally simple, but seasoned with serious and cheerful conversation. After table he was fond of having a little music with his friends and children. In praise of music he said: "Music is great comfort to a sad person. It cheers and refreshes the heart and fills it with contentment. It is half a schoolmaster and makes the people softer, meeker, more modest, and more reasonable. I have always loved music. Whoever knows this art has a good nature and is fit for everything. Music should by all means be taught in the schools. A schoolmaster must be able to sing, or I will not look at him." At another time he said: "Music is a gift and blessing of God. Next to theology I give to music the first place and highest honor."

**5. Luther's Opinion on His Wife and Holy Matrimony.** Luther writes of his married life: "God willed it, and, praise God, I have done well, for I have a pious and true wife in which a man may confide; she spoils nothing." In these words he lauds his Kate: "She has not only faithfully nursed and cared for me as a pious wife, but she has also waited upon me as a servant. The Lord repay her on that day. I consider her more precious than the kingdom of France, for she has been to me a good wife, given and presented to me of God, as I was given to her. I love my Kate, yes, I love her more than myself, that is certainly true. I would rather die myself than have her and the children die." In praise of marriage he says: "According to God's Word there is no sweeter and dearer treasure upon earth than holy matrimony, which He Himself has instituted, and which He also preserves and has adorned and blessed above all other estates."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Luther's Last Days and Death.**

**1. Luther's Presentiment of Death.** Eight days after his last birthday, which he celebrated on the 10th of November in the company of his friends, he finished his exposition of Genesis and closed his lecture to the students with these impressive words: "I am weak! I cannot continue; pray God to grant me a blessed death." And he wrote to a friend: "I am sick of this world, and the world is sick of me; it will not be difficult for us to part, as a guest quits his inn. Therefore I pray for a peaceful end, I am ready to depart." At the close of his last sermon in Eisleben the thoughts of his heart are expressed in this wish: "May God give us grace that we gratefully accept His beloved Word, increase and grow in the knowledge and faith of His Son, and remain steadfast in the confession of His holy Word unto our end! Amen."

**2. Luther's Journey to Eisleben.** In the beginning of 1546 the counts of Mansfeld requested Luther to come to Eisleben and settle a dispute which had arisen between themselves and their subjects. Luther consented to go, and, together with his three sons, on the 23d of January, he set out on his last pilgrimage on this earth. In Halle he visited his friend Dr. Jonas. While there he preached on the conversion of Paul and praised the writings of this apostle as the holy of holies. On the 28th of January, when crossing the swollen Saale in a small boat, his life was in great danger. Luther said to Jonas, "Dear Jonas, how it would please the devil if I, Dr. Martin, with you and our guides, would fall into the water and drown!" Not far from Eisleben he became so weak that fears were entertained for his life. But he soon regained his strength. In Eisleben Luther preached several times, and took great pains to settle the dispute between the counts and their subjects. When mat-



ters were settled Luther began to think of returning home; but God had decided otherwise.

**3. Luther's Illness and Death.** Already on the 17th of February Luther could not attend the meetings because of his increasing weakness. In accordance with the advice of his friends and the counts he remained in his room and rested. About eight o'clock in the evening he took his medicine and lay down on his couch, saying, "If I could sleep for half an hour I believe I would improve." He now slept calmly till ten o'clock, when he awoke, arose, and went into his bedroom. As he entered the room he said, "In the name of God, I am going to bed. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, Thou faithful God." At one o'clock he awoke and said, "O Lord God, I feel so bad! Ah, dear Dr. Jonas, I believe I shall die here at Eisleben where I was born and baptized." Again he left his bedroom and entered the sitting room, saying again, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, Thou hast redeemed me, Thou faithful God." When he was again resting on his couch his friends hurried to his side, with Count Albrecht, the countess, and two physicians. When, upon repeated rubbings, he began to perspire freely Dr. Jonas thought he was improving, but Luther answered, "No, it is the cold sweat of death; I will give up my spirit, for the sickness is increasing." Then he prayed thus: "O my heavenly Father, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou God of all consolation! I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed to me Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and extolled, whom the wicked Pope and the ungodly dishonor, persecute, and blaspheme. I pray Thee, Lord Jesus Christ, receive my poor soul into Thy hands. O heavenly Father, although I must quit this body and be torn away from this life, I nevertheless know assuredly that I shall be with Thee forever, and that no one

can pluck me out of Thy hands." Then three times he repeated the passage: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him



Luther's Death.

should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3, 16, and the words of the 68th Psalm: "He that is our God, is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues of death." When the physician gave him a cordial he took it and said, "I pass away; I shall yield up my

spirit," after which he rapidly repeated these words three times: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit, Thou hast redeemed me, Lord, Thou faithful God." Now he lay quiet, when spoken to he did not answer. Dr. Jonas called into his ear, "Reverend father, are you firmly determined to die upon Christ and the doctrine you have preached?" Loud and distinctly Luther answered, "Yes!" Having said this he turned upon his side and fell asleep, saved in the faith of his Redeemer, on the 18th of February, 1546, between two and three o'clock in the morning.

**4. Luther's Funeral.** The sad tidings of Luther's death spread rapidly through town and country. A great multitude of people of all classes gathered to view the precious remains of the man who had again brought to light the saving Word of God. When the news of Luther's death reached Wittenberg and Melanchthon told the students, he exclaimed, "Alas, he has been taken from us, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof, by whom the church was guided in this last age of the world!" On the 19th day of February the corpse was laid in a metallic coffin, borne into the Castle Church of Eisleben, and placed before the altar. On the following day Dr. Coelius preached an excellent sermon, after which the corpse was carried in solemn funeral procession to Wittenberg. With weeping and wailing a countless multitude surrounded the hearse, and in nearly every village the bells were tolled. When, late at night, the funeral approached the gates of Halle the clergy, the city council, the schools, and the citizens, together with women and children, marched out to meet it and escorted the corpse into the church. The service opened with Luther's hymn, "Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee," the weeping being heard more than the singing. On the 22d of February the funeral train reached Wittenberg. Amid the tolling of the bells it moved toward the Castle Church, the hearse being followed by Luther's widow, his

four children, and other relatives. Then came the faculty, the students, and the citizens. Dr. Bugenhagen preached a comforting sermon, which was frequently interrupted by his own tears and the weeping of his audience. At the close Melancthon delivered a Latin oration, after which the corpse was lowered into the vault near the pulpit, where it awaits the coming of the resurrection morn.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### **Afflictions of the Lutheran Church in Germany after the Reformation.**

**1. The Smalcald War.** Already during the life of Luther clouds of war had frequently arisen, threatening to destroy the Lutheran church. But as long as Luther lived the storm did not break. His prophecy was fulfilled: "I have fervently prayed to God, and still beseech Him daily, to check the evil counsels of the papists and permit no war to come upon Germany while I live, and I am sure that God has certainly heard my prayer, and I know that as long as I live there will be no war in Germany. Now when I am dead, rest and sleep do you also pray. I will die before this calamity and misery come upon Germany." Scarcely had Luther closed his eyes when the emperor and the Pope thought the time had come again to strengthen popery and oppress the Lutheran doctrine with the sword, aye, completely to destroy it. The emperor accused the Lutheran princes of disobedience because they would not submit to the Edict of Augsburg, and declared the ban of the empire against them. Soon thereafter he made war upon them. The Lutherans also gathered an army for their defense. Before the Elector John Frederick was aware of it the emperor's army, led by a traitor, fell upon him.

On the 24th of April, 1547, the battle was fought near Muehlberg on the Elbe. The army of the Lutheran princes

was defeated; 3000 remained upon the battlefield, and the elector himself was taken prisoner. Not long thereafter he was condemned to die. Only on condition that he surrender his electoral crown and domain to the Lutheran Duke Maurice of Saxony, who had joined the forces of the emperor, was he to be pardoned. The elector gave up his country without remonstrance, but he would not forsake his faith. His high courage earned him the title, "The Magnanimous." For when the emperor demanded that he sign the resolutions of the Council of Trent in which the Lutheran doctrine was condemned, he declared with indignation: "I will abide steadfast in the doctrine and confession which, together with my father and other princes, I confessed at Augsburg, and rather give up country and people, yea, and my head also, than forsake the Word of God."

Thus the cause of the Lutheran confessors seemed to be lost. But right in the midst of war's tumult and the enemy's triumph sounded the word of the Lord: "Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us," Is. 8, 10. God helped wonderfully. Maurice of Saxony demanded of the emperor the release of his father-in-law, Philip of Hesse. When the emperor refused to do this Maurice turned against him with his army and put him to flight. In 1555 the Peace of Augsburg was signed. By it complete liberty of religion and worship was guaranteed to the Lutherans for the future.

**2. Doctrinal Controversies.** Already in the days of Luther fanatics had attempted to darken and displace the true doctrine with diverse errors. After his death his prophetic words were fulfilled: "I see it coming, if God does not give us faithful pastors and ministers the devil will disrupt the church by factious spirits, and will not leave off nor cease till he has finished it. If the devil cannot do it through the Pope and the emperor he will accomplish it through those who now agree with us in doctrine. Therefore



pray God to let His Word remain with you, for abominable things will happen. I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”

Scarcely had the faithful watchman and guardian been gathered to his fathers when everywhere teachers and preachers arose who departed from the truth of God's Word and tried to set up their own false teachings. Thus some taught: Good works are necessary unto salvation; others, again, maintained: Not only are they unnecessary, but they are harmful to our salvation. Again, it was taught that man could prepare himself for grace, and assist in his conversion. Others even secretly plotted to introduce the false doctrines of the Reformed into the Lutheran church. Thus the bright light which shone so brilliantly in Luther's days was in danger of being obscured by the doctrines of men. But in the midst of such confusion God had His faithful confessors. After heated contests truth, by God's grace, obtained the victory. In 1577, by the united labors of the faithful confessors, the Form of Concord, the last confession of the Lutheran church, was completed. In this confession the Lutheran church renounces all error and demands of all its members unity of doctrine and confession. The reestablished unity of doctrine called forth loud rejoicing and thanksgiving to God everywhere in Germany. In 1580 the Book of Concord of the Lutheran church, containing also the Form of Concord, appeared in print for the first time.

**3. The Thirty Years' War.** This good fortune and peace of the Lutheran church did not last long. Satan did not cease to attack her. For his purpose he especially used the Jesuits, a new order of monks. These allied servants of the Pope used every means to suppress the Lutheran church. As advisers of princes, in the confessional, and as teachers at the higher schools they fanned the flame of hatred against the Lutherans, and their endeavors were not in vain. Through them a war of thirty years began to rage in

Germany. During the reign of Emperor Rudolph II the religious peace guaranteed at Augsburg was broken repeatedly, and the Lutherans were sorely oppressed. Finally, when a Protestant church in Bohemia was forcibly closed and another was even torn down, the storm broke loose. By it the greater part of Germany was laid waste, and untold misery was caused. Everywhere the evangelical princes were defeated, and their cause seemed to be lost. The Pope and his minions rejoiced.

But in the hour of greatest distress help appeared in the person of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden. Everywhere the people welcomed him. However, in his march of triumph through Germany he met with a bloody death. On the 6th of November, 1632, a battle was fought at Luetzen. In the Swedish army the trumpeters played the hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." Then the whole army sang, "May God Bestow on us His Grace." Whereupon the king cried, "Now at it! In the name of God! Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, help us fight this day in honor of Thy holy name!" The Swedes gained a glorious victory, but their king, struck by a bullet, fell dying from his horse. Sixteen years longer the deplorable war raged on. In 1648 the long-desired peace was finally concluded. In it the Religious Peace of Augsburg was again acknowledged and extended to include the Reformed church. The Pope protested violently, but in vain.

It is true, conditions after the war were terrible in Germany, also for the Lutheran church. But the chastenings of the Lord strengthened the faith in His Word, and the church flourished and prospered. Faithful pastors strengthened the Christians by their sermons and their writings, and everywhere the seed grew and brought fruit. It was just in this time that pious poets made their harps resound and sang their glorious hymns to the honor and praise of God.

**4. Rationalism and Unionism.** In no way had the devil succeeded in smothering the Lutheran church in its own blood or in destroying it by false doctrine. Again and again courageous witnesses arose, and in loud and clear words testified that man is justified and saved by grace alone, for Christ's sake, through faith. At the end of the seventeenth century, however, men arose in England who craftily sought to abolish the Christian faith. These were the so-called Deists, or Freethinkers. Their doctrine, at first, passed from England to France, and then to Germany. Human reason was to take the place of the Bible. Luther's prophecy was fulfilled: "Until now you have heard the true, faithful Word; now beware of your own thoughts and your own wisdom. The devil will light the candle of reason and deprive you of faith." Not the Scriptures, the revelation of God, but human reason was to decide matters of faith and salvation. Whatever did not agree with human reason was simply to be rejected as superstition. Whoever confessed his faith in the truths of the Bible was called an obscurant. Those were sad times.

In addition, the so-called "Union" in Germany, by sacrificing the biblical truth, made the attempt to unite the Lutheran and the Reformed churches into a mixed church, which was called the Evangelical church. In this way the ruin of the church of the pure Gospel was to be completed. Faithful Lutherans who would not join in this apostasy were violently persecuted, cast into prison, cruelly punished, or compelled to emigrate into foreign countries, Australia or America.

## CHAPTER XX.

### The Lutheran Church in America.

**1. The Mustard Seed.** When the Lutheran church in Germany was in its prime it was transplanted also across the waters, into the wilds of America. As early as 1638 the

first Lutheran Swedes emigrated to America and founded the first Lutheran congregation in the valley of the Delaware. In 1650 the Dutch had also founded Lutheran churches in the State of New York. The most important of these churches was in the city of New York. It was cruelly oppressed by the Reformed officials. The true Lutheran confessors were frequently fined and imprisoned. As soon as England, however, took possession of this Dutch colony the Lutherans were granted liberty of conscience and freedom of worship.

On New Year's day, 1709, the first *German* Lutheran congregation, with its pastor, Kocherthal, landed on the coasts of America. They likewise settled in the State of New York and founded several colonies on the banks of the Hudson. The greatest number of Germans settled in the State of Pennsylvania. Since 1742 their most zealous pastor was Henry Melchior Muehlenberg. Together with diligent colaborers he founded many congregations, which afterwards united to form the Pennsylvania Synod. Since 1734 Lutheran Salzburgers were found in the Colony of Georgia. Rationalism and fanaticism, however, made powerful inroads also into this flourishing Lutheran church of America. The time came when very few had any idea of the nature of true Lutheranism.

But the light was once more to shine in this land of the West. In 1839 seven hundred Lutheran Saxons came to America. They brought their pastors, candidates, and teachers with them. After suffering severe persecution they had left their old fatherland to live here, in this land of liberty, in accordance with their most holy faith. A part of them remained in St. Louis and founded a congregation with a Christian school. The most of these faithful confessors settled in Perry County, in the State of Missouri, where they founded a number of colonies with congregations and Christian schools. In the colony of Altenburg

a seminary was even erected for the education of ministers. Since 1841 the congregation at St. Louis was served by Carl Ferdinand William Walther as pastor and preacher. This man has proved to be of inestimable blessing for the Lutheran church of America. In 1844 he and his congregation began to issue the *Lutheraner* in order to gather the scattered Christians around the Word of God. This paper was to be a powerful means to acquaint people with the Lutheran doctrine and to defend it against all error. The very first number was a trumpet that gave a distinct and powerful sound. After reading it, the missionary Wyneken joyfully exclaimed, "God be praised, there are more Lutherans in America!" In the summer of 1838 he had come to this country a candidate of the holy ministry, twenty-eight years of age, in order to bring the Gospel to the scattered Germans. In Germany he had read and heard of their great spiritual need, and their misery had touched his heart. After a short stay in Baltimore he traveled inland, toward Ohio and Indiana. He came to the little town of Fort Wayne, where he found a little congregation. Here Wyneken preached several times, officiated at funerals, and baptized. The people learned to love him, and called him as their pastor. From here he journeyed to and fro, and, undaunted by hardships, visited his scattered brethren of the faith, brought them the Word of Life, and gathered them into congregations. In the following years other Lutheran pastors, some of them accompanied by their congregations, also came to America. In this way the Lutheran colonies of the Saginaw Valley were founded.

**2. The Tree.** In 1845 a number of likeminded pastors met in conference at Cleveland, Ohio, to discuss the founding of an orthodox Lutheran synod. In the following year several of these pastors met in St. Louis in order to consult with Walther and other Saxon pastors concerning the same matter. On this occasion the draft of a synodical constitu-



tion was carefully considered together with the local congregation. This draft was later on submitted to an assembly at Fort Wayne. Finally, in 1847, at Chicago, the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States was founded. Walther was unanimously elected president. The members of this Synod had recognized that the doctrine restored by Luther and contained in the confessions of the Lutheran Church is the true and pure doctrine of the Word of God. Upon this foundation they resolved to stand and in the future to carry on together the work of the Lord in this country. And to this day, by the grace of God, they have remained true to this confession. They accept God's revealed Word as the only source of knowledge for doctrine and practise. And the heart of all their teaching is the doctrine of justification of a poor sinner before God, not through his own works and merit, but alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure shall through eternity endure" is the watchword which the Synod has not only written on its *Lutheraner* and which practically is the motto, too, of the *Lutheran Witness*, but which also its members dearly cherish in their hearts.

For the preparation and education of its pastors and teachers the Synod has, in the course of years, established a large number of institutions. The first of these is the Concordia Theological Seminary at St. Louis, which prepares more men for the Christian ministry than any other similar institution. In this institution Dr. Walther labored with signal blessing as professor and through his lectures and his many writings became the outstanding leader of teachers, pastors, and congregations. He died in 1887. In Springfield, Ill., the Synod has a supplementary theological seminary. Normal colleges are maintained at River Forest, Ill., and Seward, Nebr. Institutions preparing

boys for the St. Louis seminary are to be found at Fort Wayne, Ind., Milwaukee, Wis., St. Paul, Minn., Concordia, Mo., Bronxville, N. Y., Winfield, Kans., Conover, N. C., Portland, Oreg., Oakland, Cal., Austin, Tex., and Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Colleges and seminaries preparing men for work in our mission-fields are supported in Brazil, Argentina, China, and India. Nearly 200 professors are laboring among approximately 3,000 students in these institutions.

Essentially the work of the Synod is carried on in the same manner as in the days of the fathers. As Wyneken, so missionaries to-day travel about visiting scattered brethren in the faith and gathering them into congregations. Christian day-schools are founded and developed for the Christian training of the children. In some localities high schools are maintained, and at Valparaiso, Ind., a Lutheran university offers higher education with a Christian background to our youth.

In 1872 a number of orthodox Lutheran synods organized the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. The following synods are members at the present time: the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America. Fraternal relations are maintained with other synods professing the same faith: with the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and Other States, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Finland, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Poland, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Alsace-Lorraine, and with several independent congregations. All the above-named synods are indefatigable in

the work of missions and in the preservation of the pure doctrine.

The mustard-seed has become a tree, a tree whose branches cover not only the States of the Union and a great part of British America, but whose twigs extend even to South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia; a tree continually growing new shoots, beneath which birds of passage from every province of Germany and from every country of the world have found their home and raise their hymns in the most diverse melodies to the honor and praise, glory, and worship of the Triune God. Everywhere, nearly all over the globe, is sung "Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice," and from countless lips Luther's hymn of battle and triumph is heard, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

---









\* 04-AYG-732 \*